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REGIONAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEEDS

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

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OF THE

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UNITED STATES SENATE

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REGIONAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEEDS

TUESDAY, MAY 31, 1983

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION,
FORESTRY, AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY,
Jackson, Miss.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9 a.m., in the Coliseum Ramada Inn, Hon. Roger W. Jepsen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Jepsen and Cochran.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER W. JEPSEN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator JEPSEN. The meeting will come to order. I would like to welcome all of you here today on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry, and Environment of the Senate Agriculture Committee. As chairman of the subcommittee I am looking forward to hearing your views on this issue of national priority, the preservation of the productive resource base of this Nation for both the present generation and for future generations.[1] We can no longer afford to look the other way when our precious heritage, our soil, is depleted and eroded. What's gone is never returned. For this reason, your views on the implementation of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, the RCA, and your thoughts on the direction of the soil conservation policies of the future are vitally important.

Before I discuss the purpose of these hearings and what we hope to accomplish, I would like to express my special appreciation to Senator Cochran for his support in this endeavor. I especially appreciate the invitation to come to Mississippi. Iowa ranks No. 1 in soil erosion; that's not a very great honor. I understand Mississippi is pushing with about No. 3 ranking. In any event, it is a serious problem for both our States and our constituencies. Senator, I'm very appreciative of your sponsorship in what is the first of these four field hearings to be held on this latest aspect of the RCA process—the oversight and comment on the proposed national program and final report. Senator, I know I speak for many of our colleagues from the Senate who over the years have noticed and appreciated your deep interest in soil and water conservation issues.

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[1] See p. 357 for the prepared statement of Senator Jepsen.

Your hard work in securing consistent funding for the soil and water conservation program is recognized. And believe me, we know how hard it is when we have for some reason or another folks in the Office of Management and Budget who continually slash the funds and who want to take funds for soil conservation and use them for flood projects in major metropolitan areas, we've got a problem. Your continued oversight on that, and resistance on that, and your hard work in keeping the finding for soil conservation consistent is appreciated.

In your position as chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture Appropriations, you have repeatedly caused Congress to realize the necessity for continued Federal funding for soil and water conservation projects. These programs are a vital link in our farm policy and our program today. The comprehensive view that you have taken in supporting all aspects of soil and water conservation as part of a Federal farm program is a perspective that is all too often unappreciated by many Members both of the Senate and the House as well as by many persons around this country. By holding these hearings in Mississippi, you are indicating again to me and to the Congress, and most important, to the people of your State, Mississippi, that your concern for continued Federal support and direct involvement in conservation programs is undiminished.

Senator Cochran is certainly a person who shares my vision for the future of a viable American agriculture, not only for his State of Mississippi, but for the United States. I do commend and thank you, Senator, for that vision and that tireless work that you have continued to do year in and year out in the Congress—first in the House of Representatives, and now in the Senate. I would also like to thank your staff, particularly Jim Newman, who is on loan to your office from the Soil Conservation Service, for his fine work in coordinating this hearing. Senator Heflin from Alabama was not able to be here today. But I would like to make a brief comment to commend him for his active interest in soil and water conservation. He shares our concerns and has been a valuable addition to the Senate Agriculture Committee and to this subcommittee.

I thank you, Senator Cochran, for your participation. Thank you for inviting us to Mississippi. We have enjoyed our stay here and we are looking forward to the rest of the day. Do you have a comment?

STATEMENT OF HON. THAD COCHRAN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.[1] I want to thank you on behalf of all our citizens of Mississippi for bringing your subcommittee to our State and chairing these hearings. It is the first in a series of hearings to be held around the country to get reactions of people who are involved on a day-to-day basis with problems of soil and water conservation in trying to do something constructive about protecting these valuable national resources. As you pointed out, we have more than a normal problem in Mississippi just as you do in your State of Iowa. We lose from our farmland over 10 tons per acre per year to erosion. When you figure the actual dollar value of the productivity loss this represents, it comes to about a billion dollars a year our Mississippi farmers are losing due to wind and water erosion. You come to Mississippi, Mr. Chairman, at a time when you can get a firsthand look at some of the reasons for that erosion. We have over a million acres of land under water in our State today. It's not something that just came upon us yesterday or will go away tomorrow. We have had this land under water in many cases for months. We are told that some of our impoundments in our reservoirs are going to be at a maximum capacity well into the summer so we are faced with a real crisis situation in our State due to flooding that is more harsh and more dramatic than normal. But even in an average year we have a considerable number of problems on our farmlands caused by erosion.

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[1] See p. 358 for the prepared statement of Senator Cochran.

The national program we are examining for soil and water conservation released by the Department of Agriculture is designed to help do something substantial about the problem. We had hearings in Washington under your chairmanship immediately after the report on this program was released. Administration officials participated in the hearings. And I know you are going to have another set of hearings in Washington after these field hearings are concluded. But your interest in getting reactions from citizens around the country I think is very important. It will help us make proper input into this program and make sure policies that are implemented are really what is needed to get at the heart of the problem.

Let me say, however, we sometimes forget that urban areas are severely impacted by soil erosion, also. Our State commissioner of agriculture, Jim "Buck" Ross, who is here and who will be one of our first witnesses, sent me a letter the other day and enclosed a copy of an article from the Jackson Clarion-Ledger as an example of how nobody is immune from the serious effects of erosion. The article points out how a creek here in the Jackson area has become a real monster and is eating away at property, houses, and streets. I appreciate having his letter bringing that point to my attention, and I will make it a part of the record.[1]

For those of you who have never met Senator Jepsen, I know you realize he is chairman of the Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation of the U.S. Senate, but he is probably the leading spokesman in the Senate for soil conservation and Government support of efforts around this country for solving our serious erosion problems. He is also chairman of the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress. In that capacity he has attracted attention to farm economy problems having hearings in Washington. These hearings bring experts from all around the country to meet with administration officials to look at the future economic well-being of our agricultural sector. Generally, the purpose of these hearings is trying to make sure farm programs that are developed and implemented in the future take into account problems brought on by lower commodity prices, overproduction, the fact that market demand has fallen off dramatically, the consequences of the imbalance in the value of foreign currencies when compared to that of the United States, trade problems and all the rest that go into making up whether or not we are able to have an economically healthy agricultural sector. I want to commend Senator Jepsen for both of those initiatives in his capacities as chairman of both of those very important committees.

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[1] See p. 359 for a reprint of the article referred to by Senator Cochran.

Mr. Chairman, I didn't mean to get wound up and make such a long speech. But I appreciate very much your being here, and I think you can see how strongly I feel about our efforts and the necessity for us doing everything possible to help solve these problems. These witnesses here today are some of the finest people in Mississippi and will be able to give us the benefit of their experience and expertise. I know it will be very helpful to the committee.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Senator. Before we call the first witness I would like to briefly explain why we are conducting these hearings and just what we expect to accomplish today. As most of you know, the subcommittee that Senator Cochran alluded to held hearings on March 9, 1983, in the spring, in Washington on the Resources Conservation Act, the RCA, and the final report and the program document. This hearing is the first major Senate effort in 2 years to focus national attention on the serious erosion and soil and water conservation problems that we as a nation must confront over the coming 10 years, 12 years, or 20 years.

The initial hearings thrust, as I said, was intended to be a nationwide congressional investigation into soil and water conservation problems, and how the USDA is confronting these problems. These field hearings are an effort to bring them home to you, the citizens of this country, the depth of this problem. But most importantly, it's to also reestablish that we, the Senators representing you, are dedicated to solving these problems, and also to assure you that we do enthusiastically accept the responsibility for finding some solutions.

We can't do this out of Washington, we can't do it without your help and input, we can't do it alone. Continued Federal interest in soil and water conservation programs is essential if the United States is to meet future domestic and worldwide demands and needs for our food and fiber products. Senator Cochran and I both feel that an unvaried Federal commitment is paramount to the continued success of our soil and water conservation programs. Similarly, I think we both are concerned that this commitment does not seem to be forthcoming in the amount that we would like to see it from this administration.

This year in the proposed budget, this administration requested $300,000 less for soil and water conservation activities than last year. Even in times of fiscal austerity, this seems to be particularly severe and unwarranted. It suggests that good land stewardship is not a priority in our overall farm effort. To me, adequate soil protection and water conservation efforts are the foundation upon which most farmers would want to rely.

Other concerns are generated because of the noncommittal tone of and conflicting statements of the final report and program document. For example, in the 1981 RCA draft report it states, and I quote: "Even with the most optimistic look, soil erosion after 50 years would still exceed the nondegradation level." End of quote.

Well, in the final report that we are examining today, the first objective is to lead to nondegradation of the Nation's soil and water resources. Yet, if the most optimistic outlook is not expected to achieve nondegradation in 50 years, how can we expect to scale down a program proposed in the final report and restricted by the 1984 proposed budget to lead to the nondegradation of our soil and water resources?

We are further concerned that neither the priorities nor the proposed program referred to the retention of prime and unique farmland. In addition, the 1981 farm law authorized the Department to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out special areas conservation programs—the matching grants program, and the RC&D program, among others. Now the proposed budget will not pay for the administration and implementation of these other conservation programs. The Congress can and has restored funding for many of these programs. We are communicating directly with Secretary Block to request administrative actions that could carry out the intent of the law. I know Secretary Block and Chief Pete Myers of the Soil Conservation Service share our concerns. But unfortunately, others in the administration do not. We cannot progress without your interest and your support. We need to know if you share our concerns, and where your needs differ, and what you feel is necessary to help you carry out soil and water conservation on the farms in your area. We went to the administration personally and asked for a full and complete explanation of the RCA report. Now we are traveling across the country to listen to the views and opinions of all of you. We will go from Jackson to Kentucky, then to Iowa, and then on to New England for a regional hearing. In Iowa, we hope to have representatives from Colorado and possibly Utah. In New England, it will be a regional area representation. Today, in addition to constituents and experts from Mississippi, we have representation here from Louisiana and also from Alabama.

Additionally, I am simultaneously conducting a series of Joint Economic Committee hearings to explore all aspects of farm programs, their current effectiveness, and their future appropriateness to ongoing farm policies. As part of that effort, I will be asking Government officials, private sector analysts, specialists in the academic, farmers, and other citizens how soil and water conservation efforts can be better integrated into all farm policies.

The RCA hearings will culminate at the end of June. The subcommittee will hold the final 1983 hearing on the RCA in Washington to listen to the views of the farm organization leaders who represent many of your interests as well. We have heard the administration's view. We are coming to you for your opinion and comment. We are not telling you what Washington thinks or what Washington wants you to think or to know. We are asking you first about your needs and asking for your suggestions. Then we will return to Washington and share what we have learned from you today. Congress will debate and deliberate on the issues, the questions, and the problems. Then from these discussions, we hope to reach a balance that will serve as a guide in Congress in directing this administration as to what you, the people, want.

We have a full schedule of witnesses today including, as I indicated earlier, some friends from the States of Alabama and Louisiana. All of you I would advise to begin with here, we will have all of the statements that you have formally prepared, they will be placed in the record as if read in total. So if you want to summarize, you may do so. In fact, I would encourage it. Both your summary and your full statement will be made part of the permanent record. We are also happy to accept testimony from anyone here today who is not on the panel, but has something prepared for insertion in the record. Finally, we invite all of you to sign the book in the back of the room, if you haven't already done so, with your name and address for the record. Senator Cochran, would you like to introduce the first witness today? We have Congressman Dowdy and Dan Kimbrough.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We do have, I want to point out, statements prepared for the record of this hearing from every member of our congressional delegation. We are glad to see some representatives from our delegation here, Dan Kimbrough representing Congressman Sonny Montgomery, and J. B. Love representing Senator Stennis. If there are others whom I haven't noticed here in the room, we welcome you and appreciate very much your being here to indicate the support of your Member of Congress whom you represent for the fact-finding effort that is ongoing. Do you have any comments that you would like to make at this time? We will certainly be happy to receive them, or if you have just the statements to submit, we appreciate that.

Mr. LOVE. We will submit our statement.[1]

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. KIMBROUGH. Congressman Montgomery has a statement that he would like to submit.[1]

Senator COCHRAN. We appreciate that. Congressman Dowdy has indicated, too, that he is going to come by today. We expect him to come in a little later and can be reconized at that time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Senator. Isn't Dan Kimbrough here?

Senator COCHRAN. Yes; he just announced he would submit a statement for the record.

Senator JEPSEN. We will start with the—we have four panels of witnesses. The first panel consists primarily of State officials. The second panel will represent farm organizations. Panel No. 3 will be resource users, and panel 4, the out-of-State witnesses. So we will start with panel No. 1, and I would now invite Jim "Buck" Ross, Commissioner of Agriculture; Billy Ross Brown, chairman of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission; and Hobson Gary, chairman of the State ASC committee to come forward. Now we have one panel member that is——

Senator COCHRAN. Yes, I think Billy Ross Brown is not here. Mr. Chairman. He is a good man, but we have the first string here.

Senator JEPSEN. You've got the varsity here.

Senator COCHRAN. That's right, dressed out.

Senator JEPSEN. The first witness is Jim "Buck" Ross, Commissioner of Agriculture. Do they call you "Commissioner" or "Secretary?" In our State it's "Secretary of Agriculture." Do you know Lowndsbury?

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[1] See p. 361 for the prepared statement of Senator Stennis and p. 362 for the prepared statement of Representative Montgomery.

Mr. Ross. He was the best man at our wedding.

Senator **Jepsen**. I guess you do know him. I read a joke in the Reader's Digest about a best man in the wedding and so on, but I think I will leave it to let you read it yourself rather than repeat it. But welcome. It's nice to meet you.

Mr. Ross. I met you in Des Moines.

Senator **Jepsen**. You made a speech, you and I both did, and we sat at the same table, yes, sir.

STATEMENT OF HON. JIM "BUCK" ROSS, COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE, STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. Ross. Mr. Chairman, Senator Jepsen, and Senator Cochran, my name is Jim "Buck" Ross. I am the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce for the State of Mississippi. I appreciate your holding the subcommittee hearings on soil and water conservation in Jackson, Miss., today. Futhermore, I appreciate your inviting me to testify on those conservation issues which are of most concern to me.

I understand the objective of the hearing is to determine how the landowner, landuser, and others, whose livelihood depends on maintaining or improving the quantity and quality of our soil and water resources, feel about the adequacy of the national program for soil and water conservation issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture last December.

Mr. Chairman, in Mississippi, as in other parts of the country, erosion is threatening our agriculture productivity. An accelerated program to conserve and develop our soil and water resources is essential to the welfare of the people of our State and Nation. Mississippi is third is the Nation in soil erosion, a dubious honor, just behind Missouri in second place, and Tennessee. The average annual soil loss on cropland is 10.9 tons per acre. Fifteen counties have over 20 tons of topsoil loss per acre. Thirty-seven counties have 10 to 20 tons of topsoil loss per acre, and 30 counties have less than 10 tons of topsoil loss per acre per year.

The estimated total annual soil loss in the State is 120 million tons. This is equivalent to 22 million 6-yard dump truck loads. Put another way, it is equal to the first inch of topsoil in two counties in Mississippi every year. Now I have heard—and I think the man was a good economist—that the wealth of a nation was its top 2 inches of topsoil. Every ton of soil lost off Mississippi fields is that much crop production washed down the drain. The topsoil loss not only reduces agriculture production, but also causes sediment to fill streams, lakes, and rivers. Take this reservoir out there, they say it needs dredging out. The board of supervisors put in a new culvert. The first year, it filled up that much. The next year—in 3 years the culvert was completely full with eroded soil.

In an effort to reduce the high rate of soil erosion in Mississippi, A. E. "Gene" Sullivan, State Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service, and I decided in my office in March of this year to initiate a special program to reduce soil erosion and better manage our natural resouces in Mississippi. Following that meeting in March, tentative plans were developed to involve Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations in a campaign to educate farmers and all Mississippi to the need to reduce soil erosion.

We then discussed the plan with the Governor. And he enthusiastically endorsed the program. At a press conference on Wednesday, April 27, the Governor of Mississippi appointed me to chair a special committee called HOT [Hold Our Topsoil]. And we are going to conduct a statewide campaign to accomplish that end. Implementation of the program will have come from a coordinated effort by Federal, State, and local groups. Included are the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension Service, State soil, water and forestry associations, Farm Bureau, and others. Farm Bureau is printing us 10,000 bumper stickers with the word "HOT" on them. We are going to Hold Our Topsoil. If you let your mind go a little bit further, if you pull up behind a beautiful girl, you know, in a car with that on her bumper sticker—we want to hold the topsoil.

Senator JEPSEN. Be sure and keep that in mind. [Laughter.]

Mr. ROSS. We have had broad support for Operation HOT and we look forward to this unique coordinated attempt to reduce Mississippi's serious soil erosion problems. In an effort to raise general public awareness and interest about soil erosion and the importance of soil conservation, we plan to blanket the State with educational material on this subject.

While activities associated with the new program will continue for several years—we don't plan to do this as a one-shot item, there's going to be a several year program—one of the major things we are going to do this year is to have field days. We want to have a demonstration farm in south Mississippi, we already have us one in central Mississippi, and in north Mississippi, where we can carry thousands of people there and show them methods that they can hold the topsoil. Thousands of farmers are expected to be attracted to these field days. Onfarm demonstrations in building erosion control dams, terraces, and grassed waterways will be conducted. The field day will also provide an excellent opportunity to discuss sod and crop rotation, new plant species, no till and minimum tillage farming, cost-share erosion control programs, weed control, new cultural systems, and year-around soil management.

USDA's 1983 payment-in-kind [PIK] is providing many Mississippi farmers with an opportuntity to experiment with various soil conserving practices on their set-aside acreage. Hence, program sponsors are making a particularly strong effort to discuss soil conservation with farmers participating in the PIK program.

Demonstration farms showing improved soil management techniques will also be a part of the program.

Also being considered for fall of 1983 are farmer oriented workshops which will provide information that will aid landowners and farm operators in making improved land use, soil conservation, and erosion management decisions.

All in all, Mississippi farm interests are embarking on an ambitious program. We are not going to sit down and not do something about it. All of us are working together. The coordinated efforts of many of the agencies and associations involved in soil resources issues may provide the key to a successful program.

In Mississippi, if we would utilize every acre of land for what the Lord intended for it to be used for, we could cut our soil erosion in half. The Lord was in a good humor, Senator, when he made Mississippi. He got every acre of land for row crops, timber, or pasture. The trouble about it, when we had those $12 soybeans they plowed up the fences, bulldozed them down, plowed from fence row to fence row. They had tried to farm this land that was too steep with these six-row planters and cultivators. And as a result, they sold their cows, bulldozed down their timber, and land that ought to be in grass should be put back in grass. The land that ought to be in timber should be put back in timber, and land that ought to grow row crops, that's where the row crops should be grown. And we can do something about the soil erosion ourselves. On land that is devoted to row crops or close-sown crops, soil erosion can be reduced by following good farming techniques.

The national program for soil and water conservation issued by USDA last December has many desirable features. I'm going to limit my comments to about three of them.

The first major concern I have is that the program shifts a greater responsibility for funding soil and water conservation programs to the States. The State of Mississippi for the first time in my lifetime is broke. This comes at a time when we are facing a very real crisis with our State revenues. The people of our State who are aware of the fiscal problems and want to reduce government spending are also speaking out loudly on the necessity of protecting our basic resources. And I think we need a renewed national commitment to soil and water conservation.

The second item has to do with Federal tax incentives. I support tax incentives to increase the establishment of conservation practices. In many cases, the farmer will not perform needed conservation practices because of the high cost and low return to him. Provisions for a reduction of his future income taxes would encourage him to establish the needed conservation practices on his farm.

And the third concern I have is the proposals for local conservation coordination boards and a State conservation coordination board. Now I don't think we need new boards. I think we have got enough boards. There presently exists a local administrative system that has proven successful for many years. And if you knew these soil conservation district commissioners—they are dedicated men, they are fine men. Conservation districts have been recognized as local, legal State subdivisions with locally elected or appointed officials responsible for setting local conservation priorities and giving guidance to a host of cooperating agencies and to solid conservation technicians. The leadership of these locally elected people has been the key to encouraging landowners and operators to plan and implement needed conservations programs. In addition, county ASC committees are locally elected to administer the Federal cost-share program. These two grassroot bodies have worked in concert, effectively accomplishing conservation objectives for many years.

Distinguished gentlemen, I appreciate the honor of appearing before you. Thank you.

Senator **Cochran**. Thank you, Commissioner. Senator Jepsen, there is one thing that should be pointed out, our State commissioner is serving as president of the National Association of State Commissioners of Agriculture this year. He is not just warming a chair either. He is doing a fine job in providing strong leadership to this organization nationwide. He is bringing the national association to Mississippi in September for a very important meeting. Jim "Buck" Ross is a very talented, true leader, not only in Mississippi, but around the country, and we are very proud of him.

Mr. **Ross**. Senator, I would like to thank you publicly at this time for your help in the national trade show. We had over 1,200 foreign buyers.

Senator **Cochran**. This was in Atlanta.

Mr. **Ross**. And from 72 countries. We had over 450 people from U.S. firms to have exhibitions in Atlanta. We hope we sold over $100 million worth—that is exported over $100 million worth of food and fiber to foreign countries in those 3 days.

Senator **Jepsen**. I heard it was a very huge success and a very spectacular show. My wife who serves in the White House went with Secretary Block down to open that up. I think she was down there. I don't know whether you saw her or not.

Mr. **Ross**. She said she was.

Senator **Jepsen**. She said she was. [Laughter.]

Senator **Cochran**. Hobson Gary is chairman of our State ASCS committee and is doing an outstanding job in that capacity. He is experienced in all matters of farming, and has been a real leader in agricultural circles in Mississippi for a long time. We are glad to have you here, Mr. Gary.

Mr. **Gary**. Thank you, Senator Cochran.

Senator **Cochran**. You may proceed.

Senator **Jepsen**. Would you mind speaking in that microphone? Can everyone hear all right back there?

Senator **Cochran**. Afterward we will have an opportunity for questions.

STATEMENT OF HOBSON GARY, CHAIRMAN, MISSISSIPPI STATE ASCS COMMITTEE

Mr. **Gary**. Before I start, I would like to say to the commissioner that ASC will cooperate with him on any of his demonstration projects, help you in any way we possibly can, and we look for your program to be a huge success, and we plan to help you every way we possibly can.

My name is Hobson Gary, and of course, Thad just told you I represent the ASC committee, and I am a farmer up in the Mississippi Delta. It's a privilege for me to appear before this committee today and to present my thoughts and ideas for a strong program on soil conservation. American production has doubled in the last 30 years in response to domestic and foreign demands for agriculture. We have a lull right now on demand. But on the long pull, we've got to produce the food and fiber right here. These demands will likely increase. Farmers will come under increased pressure for production by using existing cropland more intensively and coverting areas now used probably for other crops. This again calls for more conservation of the soil than we are now using.

This country's ability to maintain and increase the availability of its soil and water resources will be critical in meeting our future demands. Also, production will depend on the degree to which the country protects the lands to keep it from gradual degradation caused by excessive soil erosion.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support the USDA's conservation programs and offer the following comments and recommendations concerning the Soil and Water Resource Act as it pertains to Mississippi. Clear national priorities need to be established and goals set. These need to be implemented on the State level with the input of our existing Federal agencies, appropriate State officials and other interested people. Within the framework of the ASC committee, the Soil Conservation Service, we should cooperate to closely establish these ASC practices and appropriate goals that are feasible within these policies. The setting of the goals on the county level should be set similarly with the State and national goals operating for the overall State policy based on a determination of county need.

We consider the agricultural conservation program, the ACP, if you would rather refer to it as that, as partnership between the Federal Government and the landowner where the cost is shared. Our farmers only have this land for a short period of time: some 2 years, some 50 years, but he doesn't have it forever. So there is a cooperation between the Federal Government and the farmer to keep this land for future generations. It's a vital tool to actually get conservation on the land. The farmer's financial shape is not good enough that he can carry this cost by himself. At the present time he pays approximately half on the practices that he carries out anyway. And in view of budget limitations, our best efforts should be directed toward improving the programs for better direction of funds, and accomplishing more with the same funds as much as we possibly can.

State and local governments should be encouraged to participate actively, and efforts should be made to get participation by them with some funding for local practices.

Now this may be a big controversy, but I'm kind of echoing what the Commissioner said here: I don't consider block grants by the Federal Government to the State government and then to another layer of bureaucracy or set of committees to be feasible. This would be slow to put to work. And with major political changes every 4 years in most States, it would tear into the continuity of the program. It would be a serious handicap. And this State is in a severe budget crunch, and it is doubtful that any funding shall be coming from State sources.

Local participation should be encouraged. Development of practices and applying is being effectively done by ASC and Soil Conservation Service. This is where the final responsibility for these programs should be left. We recognize that more participation by all groups should be encouraged. But we strongly recommend that we go with the existing organizations that we have in place that are perfectly capable of administering these programs and I think will do your best job for you. I do not feel that creating a State conservation coordinating board appointed by the Governor would be in the best interest of conservation in Mississippi. This would create again another layer of bureaucracy. We should work on using our present system with more emphasis on input and participation for interested people.

Secretary Block has designated the Food and Fiber Council [FAC] comprised of senior USDA agency officials in each State to provide effective coordination of better agricultural programs. These same groups, this same FAC group, can administer this program. They also promote and encourage local leadership and joint public and private efforts to deal with State problems which include conservation. FAC is in a position to encourage this coordinated and joint effort by key Federal and State agencies.

I favor targeting U.S. funds and personnel to designated areas showing the most need. However, I do feel that counties should not have ongoing conservation programs severely curtailed as a result of targeting. It doesn't seem right for one county to be cut completely out of conservation programs because we are targeting to three or four given areas. We feel that if we have targeting, we should have some additional funding to help offset the targeting. It kind of causes a false economy to reduce conservation in one area and target it so heavy in others. Both of them are important. So we feel strongly, even with budget limitations, that there should be additional funding for targeting.

The measures which are most cost efficient should be given priority. Jim "Buck" mentioned minimum tillage. We have had a strong program in our State on minimum tillage and no till demonstrations to demonstrate to our farmers the value of each and how it will help them on their farms. All agencies should intensify their efforts to get such results on the land by proper use of education, publicity, and demonstration projects as mentioned by our Commissioner a minute ago.

It is important to analyze and evaluate the conservation program process so that the most cost-effective practices can be emphasized and a major effort can be directed toward these. I consider these to be the key points outlined in the Soil and Water Resources Act.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you.

Senator **Cochran**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice in looking at this report from the Department of Agriculture on what you can expect from the national conservation program, and in reference to your comment about targeting to put the most of the money where the critical problems are, that by fiscal year 1987, and I quote, "Targeting assistance will account for 25 percent of the technical and financial assistance budget of two USDA agencies, Soil Conservation Service, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service." Now to me this means there has to be some cutting somewhere, even though they talk about a base level of assistance that will be made available to all areas where needed. I agree with Mr. Gary that we may be making an error diverting funds and assistance from places where currently the need may not be critical to some of the more severe areas.

Mr. **Gary**. As critical.

Senator **Cochran**. As critical. As Commissioner Ross said, we have a few counties where you lose over 20 tons per acre per year, and if we targeted just those counties for assistance, we might not have anything left for the rest. That worries me. Does this program suggest we will wait until a county is losing 20 tons per acre per year before we provide an adequate level of assistance? That concept concerns me somewhat.

Mr. **Gary**. If I might say, we agree with the targeting concept. We just don't want to run off everybody else to do it. I think both of them can be done simultaneously.

Senator **Cochran**. I want to put in the record, Mr. Chairman, if I may, a copy of a newspaper article Commissioner Ross sent to me bringing to my attention the fact that soil conservation problems are severe in our towns and right here in Jackson, Miss. This article is about a creek that was just chewing up a neighborhood and illustrates how all areas of the State are affected by this problem. If we could put this article in the record, I would appreciate it.[1]

I think this hold our topsoil committee the commissioner of agriculture is chairing is an indication of local initiative in an effort to coordinate the work of Federal, State and local agencies that ought to be commended. The farm demonstrations that are going to be held on what can be done to help provide some relief from erosion problems will go a long way toward educating our farmers and landowners about individual practices they can use to help solve some of these problems. This is a program that's under way now, as I understand. Did this farm demonstration idea receive any impetus from enactment of the 1977 legislation that called for compiling of a national conservation program, or is this strictly a local initiative? Do you know whether this is happening in other States?

Mr. Ross. No, sir, Senator, it's just a local initiative that we are not going to sit around here and see our land eroded because we feel like we have obligations to generations yet unborn. When this land is gone, it's gone. We've got an old boy over here where I live in Pelahatchie that likes the fruit of the vine. And he called the supervisors the other night and told them "Jim Buck's saying they're not making any more land. Bring me a load of dirt." So we are going to wake up one of these days and it's going to be gone if we don't do something about it.

Senator **Jepsen**. In your opinion, Mr. Commissioner, should the Federal Government require some sort of a conservation practice with the farm programs, and can they be integrated?

Mr. Ross. All we're trying to do, Senator, is to get the man that owns the land to do something about his property.

Senator **Jepsen**. Are you trying to do that through persuasion or are you trying to make it mandatory or a combination or what?

Mr. Ross. Pride, one thing. Education. If I had my way, I would almost have a law that if a man owns a piece of land that when he dies and passes that land on, it has to be in better condition than when he got it. I think we have an obligation because the land is the basis of all wealth. You can take any man in Mississippi that has made a lot of money, he's made it from the land. The land, to me, is eternal. And we are blessed here. Thousands of years ago a lot of Iowa came down here and formed the Mississippi Delta and we have got the best land that a crow ever flew over, and we appreciate it. But we want the erosion stopped.

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[1] See p. 359.

Senator **Jepsen**. You want to keep it there.

Mr. **Ross**. Yes, sir.

Senator **Jepsen**. Let me rephrase my question a little bit differently. The soil conservation programs that have Federal funds involved, should they be made mandatory or should we——

Mr. **Ross**. I don't like anything that's mandatory.

Senator **Jepsen**. You don't like anything?

Mr. **Ross**. No, sir.

Senator **Jepsen**. I recall you said that there should be tax incentives for conservation?

Mr. **Ross**. Yes, sir.

Senator **Jepsen**. That's the persuasion type rather than the mandatory type?

Mr. **Ross**. Yes, sir.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Gary, how do you feel about it? Should soil conservation programs along with other programs be made mandatory?

Mr. **Gary**. Unless you send us funding with them, I don't see how we can make it mandatory. If it's got to be mandatory, we are going to have to have a heavy increase in funding because a lot of people don't participate in it.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, do you think there is any room at all in integrating any form of soil conservation practice with farm programs whereby the Federal Government pays the farmers to set aside or whatever program it is?

Mr. **Gary**. I wouldn't object to rules as to how we handle set-aside to make it a conservation practice. I see nothing wrong with it at all.

Senator **Jepsen**. Now the Chair is not advocating or commenting on the rightness or wrongness of what I'm asking about, but I have asked at every soil conservation hearing I have had in Washington and out of Washington—I ask this question and keep a tabulation. It's kind of interesting to see that since 1979 the movement toward requiring somebody to do something has been consistent. As each year goes by and soil conservation problems are illuminated and are presented and as more people understand the serious problem, more people say, "Well, maybe we ought to require something if we're going to do something." Now 4 or 5 years ago if you mentioned the word "mandatory," it was a dirty word. Now people are saying "Well, we've got to do something about it." They still don't go all the way and say "mandatory." But they say we should work it into some of our programs.

Mr. **Gary**. As an example of what you are alluding to, for instance, on set-aside, we've got some land that this is the second year we've had set-aside on it—with 20 percent frozen last year, we had the 20 percent and the PIK this year. And we are trying to require our farmers to maintain—at least mow that land the second year because if they don't it is going to end up growing back and be little bushes out there. We are trying to maintain that soil as best we can.

Senator **Jepsen**. Have your heard about the provision that will allow you to use some of your PIK acres for wildlife spots and habitat development?

Mr. **Gary**. Very familiar.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you think you would be interested in keeping some of these acres in a multiyear set-aside for wildlife feed and habitat purposes?

Mr. **Gary**. I think it would be real good.

Senator **Jepsen**. That would also maybe come right in with your HOT program because they can be integrated and they are one and the same, and it might be an added inducement not only for the farmer landowner to do this, but this manner of education of the public is the very key to get support for your program here in Mississippi or to get support for a national program. We need all the people involved. Consensus is the way democracy runs. You know, we could gain a lot of attention and goodwill and education I think through some form of multiyear set-side for wildlife feed and habitat because our city cousins like to hunt.

Mr. **Gary**. From the State level, we have tried to keep our wildlife plots as small as we can which means that we have more of them—say, half-acre plots rather than 10-acre plots. If we have half-acre plots that are set aside, then we have a lot more of them for wildlife. And this has been successful so far.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you have any further questions, Senator Cochran?

Senator **Cochran**. I don't have any except to express my appreciation for your taking time to be here. You have been very helpful to us. Thank you very much.

Senator **Jepsen**. Before you leave, I have one final question. I want to explore this. The local block grants—both of you expressed a reservation about block grants and how they should be handled. If I remember correctly, both of you indicated that you did not want an extra layer of bureaucracy. So block grants, you indicated, should go directly to the local——

Mr. **Gary**. The ASC and soil conservation are setup to handle these right now. You've got the machinery there to do that job. And we would like to see it put in their hands rather than have this other layer of bureaucracy that changes with political elections in each State. I mean we would like to see more continuity to it.

Senator **Jepsen**. Commissioner, how do you feel about that? How do you think the Governor would feel? You're the commissioner of agriculture of this State. Do you want the ASC and the Soil Conservation Service to handle these funds?

Mr. **Ross**. I don't think the Governor would mind at all. Probably be glad not to have it.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, let me repeat. You are very candid and direct. [Laughter.]

Mr. Commissioner, do you have any objection to the ASC and the ASCS—Mr. Gary, I guess I might start with you. Would you mind having the—do you think it should be the ASC or do you think it should be the ASCS that handled it? Or is that a leading question?

Mr. **Gary**. Run that by me again.

Senator **Jepsen**. Would you want the ASCS to handle it or ASC to handle it? Who would be better at handling the appropriation?

Mr. **Gary**. You mean the ASC or Soil Conservation Service?

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes.

Mr. **Gary**. I think it should be a cooperation between the two. They work hand in hand right now. When ASC funds a project, Soil Conservation sees that it's done. I mean the two agencies work so close now that you can't really tell one from the other. And we will continue that cooperation if you will let us do it.

Senator **Jepsen**. There's no turf battle at all between the two agencies?

Mr. **Gary**. No, sir, not on our side of the fence, and I don't think it is on the other side. I'm not conscious of it, if it is.

Senator **Jepsen**. You think they could work together. Is that the established board you are recommending it go through?

Mr. **Gary**. Yes, sir.

Senator **Jepsen**. Is there any other State board that exists in Mississippi, for example, that would have a statewide knowledge of soil conservation needs?

Mr. **Gary**. Those are the two that we have operated through. As Jim Buck so ably pointed out, they are locally elected. The farmers in that given area elect these people, and they put great faith in them. And we would like to see us be able to administer whatever programs you send down to us.

Senator **Jepsen**. The combination is already in place. Would you have to mechanically create a board from the ASCS and the ASC?

Mr. **Gary**. No, sir. We have just almost daily contact at the present time.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very much.

Senator **Cochran**. Mr. Chairman, we now have a panel including Robroy Fisher representing the Delta Council; L. A. Davidson, American Agriculture Movement; Hugh Arant of the Mississippi Farm Bureau; and Robert Mashburn representing the Mississippi Soybean Association. I know I have seen Robroy and L. A. Davidson here, and here is Mr. Mashburn of the Mississippi Soybean Association. I saw Hugh Arant up in the Delta Friday, but I don't believe I see him here today. Well, let's go ahead and begin with this panel. Robroy, why don't you lead off? The chairman mentioned at the outset that if you have copies of statements they will be put in the record in full, and if you would like to summarize or make some brief comments referring to those statements, that would probably be better. Then we will have a chance to ask some questions.

STATEMENT OF ROBROY FISHER, REPRESENTING DELTA COUNCIL, STONEVILLE, MISS.

Mr. **Fisher**. Thank you, Thad. I want to thank you gentlemen for sacrificing your Memorial Holiday to give us an opportunity to express our views on soil and water conservation which are of concern to our area and State. Thank you very much for interrupting your busy schedules to meet with us here in Mississippi.

My name is Robroy Fisher. I am a farmer from Washington County, Miss. I am here today as a spokesman for Delta Council, an organization that represents the 18 Delta and part-Delta counties. I have served as chairman of the local soil conservation district and president of our State association of conservation districts, and as chairman of our State soil and water conservation commission. I have submitted written testimony, but with your permission, Senator, I will try to highlight portions of that testimony.[1]

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has published its final program report and environmental impact statement which comprises the "National Program for Soil and Water Conservation." While there are portions of this report that we strongly support, there are other areas that are cause for concern.

In trying to assess whether the national program adequately addresses conservation needs in Mississippi, we find basic support for some 10 or 12 of the components of the proposed program, but strong opposition to those components that recommend a different structure and relationship between conservation organizations. We support the current organization of local, State, and Federal agencies with conservation objectives determined by local soil conservation districts and farmer committees. This program has worked well throughout the years, and we strongly support the continuation of this approach with emphasis on coordination of program planning and evaluation. We oppose Federal centralization of program development and operation.

We notice with interest that a majority of 41 States supported targeting more USDA funds and personnel to areas where erosion and other conditions threaten the productive capacities of soil and water resources. A majority in five States, all in the South, opposed it. We would suggest that instead of these five States in one area being out of step with the rest of the Nation, they are trying to say that targeting at the expense of other important projects in these States, will not solve their problems. Just as the problems in many States are different, the approach to solution must be flexible.

Due to budget restraints, the Soil Conservation Service work force in Mississippi has declined more than 22 percent since 1978, from 542 in 1978 to 425 employees in 1981.

A 5 percent per year diversion to targeting for the next 5 years would destroy our ability to provide technical assistance in nontargeted areas. The greatest impact will be in the water resource projects which are of great importance to Mississippi farmers. Block grants to States that perhaps would be matched by State funds to carry out needed soil and water conservation programs is another area of concern to us. Grant funds that can be used for several purposes—technical assistance, financial assistance, education, low-income loans and other components of "total conservation program" would create competition among agencies and organizations at the local and State level and could result in significant reduction in direct assistance to farmers in planning and carrying out a soil and water conservation program on their land. Additionally, due to poor economic condition and competition for funds, in the foreseeable future there will be no funds in the State treasury to match available Federal funds. This does not mean that Mississippi farmers oppose recognition of the need for extra efforts, and additional funding should be made available to meet these problems. The fact is, however, that funding for work in these areas would be at the expense of other projects for which support would be greatly reduced.

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[1] See p. 367 for the prepared statement of Mr. Fisher.

We wish to commend the Secretary for focusing nationwide attention on the need for action to minimize the loss of soil resources through wind and water erosion. This, together with programs to help farmers more effectively utilize and conserve water resources, represent what we believe to be our most important conservation needs. We believe that we can deal with these needs more effectively through a program that is closely aligned to the soil and water conservation plan that we have been using for so many years. This plan provides for flexible programs based on voluntary cooperation of land users. The effectiveness of this plan has been proven and the greatest need is for a realistic level of support.

I will be glad to try to answer any questions that you might have. But I want to thank you again, Senator Jepsen and Senator Cochran for being with us today.

Senator **COCHRAN**. Thank you, Robroy. Mr. Mashburn of the Mississippi Soybean Association.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT MASHBURN, PRESIDENT, HINDS COUNTY FARM BUREAU, AND PRESIDENT, MISSISSIPPI SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

Mr. **MASHBURN**. Chairman Jepsen, Senator Cochran, I am Robert Mashburn, a cotton, soybean and cattle farmer in Hinds County. I am president of the Mississippi Soybean Association, president of the Hinds County Farm Bureau, and a member of the board of the Hinds County Farm Bureau, and a member of the board of the Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District. I appreciate the opportunity to appear at this hearing and make a statement about soil and water conservation both from a farmer's point of view and as a representative of a farm organization.

We appreciate very much the interest that you and your committee members are showing in conservation by holding these hearings. It is evident from your presence here today that you are concerned with the problems just as we are. The conversion of thousands of acres of grassland and soybeans was necessary for many farmers to survive during the recent years. This land use conversion has now led us into a very critical situation. The erosion problem in our area is the worst it has been in my 30 years of farming. The manpower and assistance needed for an adequate conservation program is greater now than at any time in recent history. I shudder to think of the condition that our land would be in today had we not had a Federal program for soil conservation. In spite of the work being done by conservation leaders we are still losing the battle.

The proposed national funding for conservation will be disastrous. Farmers in our area are beginning to realize that they must do a better job of protecting their land. We have almost completely gotten away from the idea of constructing terraces on farmlands. I, for one, did not like terraces. But I now realize that the only way I can farm my land and protect it from excessive erosion is to build them. Terraces are expensive and require a lot of technical assistance. Farmers cannot lay out their terraces and in many cases cannot afford the total cost of building them. We must have an adequate staff at the field office level. The worst thing that could happen would be for us not to have an adequate staff to provide the technical services now that farmers are finally ready to install practices such as terraces and sediment control structures.

The American Soybean Association and the Farm Bureau have both adopted very positive programs concerning soil and water conservation. They are going to give support, but they are depending on the Soil Conservation Service and local conservation districts to provide the leadership. I do not feel that we can afford to put the burden of the conservation program on State government. The future of farmers and conservation programs in Mississippi will have a direct effect on the lives of people in New York City and Washington, D.C. and other urban areas. Their children and future generations are depending on our soil, so it's only logical that they help us by supporting a strong national program of soil and water conservation.

We have a good program of soil conservation in Mississippi and I think our priorities are right. We do not need new programs and new agencies. We need adequate funding and support for our existing programs. I do have some concern about targeting funds. The idea sounds good but what is going to happen in those areas with low erosion rates when they go for a long period of time without technical assistance.

We could create some new problems by neglecting this area. As long as soil is being used for the production of crops the conservation program will never be completed. Just as a strong military is necessary to maintain peace a strong conservation program is necessary to maintain productive land for present and future generations.

I have some concern about the various programs of USDA. I feel that most of the programs are good but we need to be careful that one program does not undermine another. I am not sure how these programs should be administered. But there needs to be more consideration given to the capability of the land. Additional financial support and expansion is not the answer if the land is not capable of producing an economical crop in the beginning.

As a member of the local soil and water conservation district I feel that we have the proper system of administering the conservation programs. We have a good program. We just need sufficient funds to maintain an adequate staff and for cost sharing on the installation of conservation practices. The Federal Government needs to provide adequate funds and let the local people continue to administer these programs. We need to keep our programs as practical as possible and we will maintain the support and cooperation of the local people.

Thank you for coming to see us and for allowing us to appear before you. Farmers and farm organizations recognize the needs in the field of conservation. But we must have your support and the support of all people. We want to do a better job and we know that you are going to help us. It certainly is a pleasure to appear before you.

Senator **Cochran**. Thank you Robert. We will hear now from L. A. Davidson and then Hugh Arant.

STATEMENT OF L. A. DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT, MISSISSIPPI AMERICAN AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT

Mr. **Davidson**. Thank you, gentlemen. My name is L. A. Davidson. I am president of the Mississippi American Agriculture Movement.[1] I want to call your attention to what Mr. Truman, President Truman used to say—"the buck stops here." I don't know where "here" is, but I am certain that the buck has stopped and this thing is about over. We are in the last phases of something that is with us to stay, and we have followed what other civilizations have followed and we are coming to the same end. That's about the most important thing I can say, and I'm sure that you all realize it. I don't think any of us realize how close to the end of it we are.

In our judgment, the "National Program for Soil and Water Conservation" is totally inadequate for Mississippi, the South, and the Nation. It is too little too late. We are losing the remnant of our productive soils at the greatest rate in history, and the rate increases with the removal of additional layers. Now targeting these areas that are losing 20.9 tons per acre may be counterproductive. It may be more important to save some of these areas where only 5 tons per acre are leaving because that may have some topsoil in it. With all these 20 tons, that is really sterile subsoil that is not really soil material, it is not actually productive soil.

The refusal of our Government to provide a viable, consistent, and reliable farm program since the early seventies has left the majority of farmers and States financially unable to take rudimentary steps to conserve our soils. Neither the States nor the farmers can assume the necessary expense for proper soil conservation.

In 1973, the Mississippi gross farm income from all sources, including timber and catfish, was nearly $2 billion. In 1982, 10 years later, production was $1.3 billion in 1973 dollars. Six counties in my area lost over $1 billion in cash flow in 1981 alone due to the decrease in the price of three crops. As everyone knows, crop production expenses increased more in that period than ever before in history.

We have no viable options. Time has run out. Much of the conservation progress made in the thirties and forties has been destroyed and we have lost an additional 100 million acres of land. Forests that were planted back in the thirties and forties have been bulldozed and put in soybeans for 2 or 3 years and they are losing money on it every year. So there's no way that submarginal land, the economic conditions, and under the present price structure—it's absolutely a futile attempt to try to keep going. The water erosion program as a problem in the United States is very much worse now and it was intolerable then. Out of the original 500 million acres of land we had 125 or 150 years ago, we now have less than 200 million acres. And very little, if any, of that land has the productive capability it had 10 years ago, much less 100 years ago.

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[1] See p. 369 for the prepared statement of Mr. Davidson.

Conservation and economics have never been separated and never will be. The interrelationship of economics and conservation was well understood many years ago and summarized very clearly in chapter I of the 1938 Yearbook. I call this book to everyone's attention because it shows that over 40 years ago they had all of the fundamental answers that we need, needed then, and need now. I quote:

> In the discussion of the obstacles to soil conservation it was shown that one of the major factors is economic instability. The instability peculiar to agriculture is the industrial and financial instability that profoundly affects agriculture. Without efforts to correct these deeper causes, any attack on the soil conservation problem in the nation as a whole can be only piecemeal and partial.

This has been brought to our attention before this morning, but I thought you might be interested in knowing that it was known in 1938, and much before. And this is basic agronomic and economic fundamental knowledge. It's not just something that has come out of the woodwork lately.

The Mississippi American Agriculture Movement recommends that you disregard all responses similar to the one from the GAO on page 65 of the 1982 Final Program Report. I would like to read it to you:

> We believe that agriculture has not compiled sufficient evidence to justify implementing the proposed preferred program. The proposed program could be an ineffective and costly solution to the Nation's soil and water resources problems. A better analytical framework is needed to meet the requirements of the 1977 act. We have developed a methodology that could be used in gathering and analyzing the basic data needed. Our report, "A Framework and Checklist for Evaluating Soil and Water Conservation Programs," so on, and so forth, sets forth guidelines that could assist agriculture in obtaining information needed to develop an effective program to improve resource conditions within limited budget resources.

Gentlemen, if we follow something like that, you just can forget about it and save the time and trouble. The American Agriculture Movement endorses the TVA statement: "Nothing less than a serious national effort to deal with such problems will be sufficient to maintain this Nation's vital agricultural base and protect water quality." We must have a crash program or nothing at all. You can just forget it. If you are going to follow the GAO response, you can just as well get Senator Byrd's fiddle and play away because that will be just as effective as some methodology that GAO is working on.

Our problem has been recognized by every competent agronomist since World War I. This thing from GAO has nothing to do with any competent advice.

The first chapter of this 1938 Yearbook clearly and effectively describes what was needed then and what is needed now. The main difference is the 100-million acres of productive topsoil that we have lost since that time. On TV last night, a farmer in an adjacent county northwest of here was viewing a nearly level field where the recent flood removed all of the topsoil. When asked how long it would take to replace it, he said: "Topsoil is hard to grow." I thought that was an understatement. Further, he said, "It will probably take three generations to replace it." He was too optimistic. Topsoil lost, for all practical purposes, cannot be replaced unless it's in an alluvial valley and gets some of this good Iowa soil. And I understand that they don't have much topsoil left and are sending us rock, sand, and sterile soil.

My work in soil survey and classification research, in addition to farming, covers 40 years and indicates that we are now destroying our soils at double the rate of 20 years ago. We are unnecessarily repeating the history processes of thousands of years that Dr. W. C. Loudermilk studied, tabulated, and warned us about in the late thirties. This was printed in 1938 after a worldwide trip studying the effects of erosion and water loss for over 7,000 years. In his summary, he says, "If the soil is destroyed, then our liberty of choice and action is gone, condemning this and future generations to needless privations and dangers." I add that to this fragmented reading material. When you refuse to learn from the past, you drastically limit your future. The U.S. Government has ignored history and has very severely limited its future.

Nearly 50 years ago, a Secretary of Agriculture, referring to the existing agricultural practices and resulting erosion, said:

> This terribly destructive process—erosion—is excusable in a young civilization. It is not excusable in the United States in the year 1938. We know what can be done and we are beginning to do it. The public is waking up, and just in time. In another 30 years, it might have been too late.

We would submit that the public and Government were aroused, but not wakened to permanent alertness. It is now too late for hundreds of thousands of acres of land. Scientists proved long ago what observant farmers have always known, namely, the rate of erosion increases as the upper layers of soil are successively removed. Most of the nonsandy U.S. cropland with a slope of more than 5 percent has no original topsoil at this moment.

The financial resources of farmers have been destroyed along with the soil and water. The present $220 billion U.S. farm debt very effectively keeps individual farmers from paying for conservation efforts. At the present failure rate, a large part of the farmers in the South will not be able to obtain prduction loans next year, much less assume conservation expenses.

As tenancy increases, with owners being sold out and having to rent from an insurance company or a railroad company, your compliance decreases. It has never been appreciable in the South that tenant farmers are not satisfactory for owners.

I prepared this bulletin in 1943 and it was given to each farmer in Tunica County for a soil map of his farm. In here, we recommended renewal directions for each soil type along with the organic matter each needed. We never saw much response. Continued duplications of this bulletin were prepared I know for 10 years for additional counties. It was very difficult to get compliance from owners, and almost impossible from tenants. Now that's in the South. It's different up in the North, but it's not that different, as I understand it.

For the reasons that I have enumerated, and others, the American Agricultural Movement recommends that the Secretary's preferred program, alternative three, page 25 of the 1982 RCA Final Program Report, be rejected as completely unworkable.

No. 2, we recommend that alternative two, page 25, be approved and implemented in a crash program which is long overdue.

No. 3, the 1983 Federal funding level should be doubled for 1984 and adjusted upward after that.

The present rules, regulations, and USDA implementation procedures should be retained.

We fully endorse the previous statements involving the work going on in the State of Mississippi between the existing organizations.

We want to again emphasize TVA's warning on page 62 of this report.

In the South, gentlemen, we need no studies, surveys, or new GAO methodology. Most of the topsoil is gone or rapidly leaving and much of the subsoil has already blocked the flood basins, the stream beds, and valleys. Dredging of the Ross Barnett lakebed forms a priority way on down. We have other streambeds that should be dredged. We need a viable, long-range, balanced farm program that will provide farms an opportunity to feed their families as well as the rest of the country. They may then be in a position to join with the Government and reduce destruction that will otherwise destroy us.

Thank you for permitting us to present this information.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Mr. Davidson. Hugh Arant, president of the Mississippi Farm Bureau. We appreciate your coming here, Hugh. You will be the final witness in this panel, and then we will have a chance to discuss some of the statements that have been made by the members. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF HUGH M. ARANT, PRESIDENT, MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Mr. ARANT. Thank you, Senator Cochran. I'm sorry I was a few minutes late. I apologize for that. And I want to extend a Mississippi welcome to Senator Jepsen from Iowa. We appreciate you coming down and seeing some of that good topsoil y'all sent us over the last 2 billion years because, if you came in, in the Mississippi Delta, you saw a good bit of it. Of course, that's a problem that you are working on today, and I commend the two of you for taking part in these hearings throughout the countryside so that you might get a little better idea about what the people on the land are really thinking about.

For the record, I am Hugh M. Arant, a farmer from Ruleville, Miss., and president of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. The Mississippi Farm Bureau is a volunteer organization of more than 145,000 families, and the vast majority of those members are farmers or directly connected to the farm in some way or another.

Our membership has taken a strong position in favor of controlling soil erosion, improving water quality, and protecting our gound water resources. These are valuable assets to the State of Mississippi. Our livelihood depends on maintaining and improving these resources. In fact, our Nation's ability to feed itself and much of the world depends on how much we and our Nation's leaders are committed to the task of preserving the quality and the quantity of our soil and water.

The Soil and Water Resource Act is one indication that the leadership of this Nation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognize that we cannot ignore the fact that we are slowly losing our ability to do just those things—to produce an adequate supply of food and fiber for the future generations.

As I said earlier, I want to commend you for coming, you and your other colleagues in the Senate for taking part in this giant step for soil and water conservation. I have been a farmer for some 35 years now and I certainly have seen some on-the-farm experience about ways of soil conservation, having been very active in my own local county unit before moving into the job that I now hold.

There are several specific areas that I want to address concerning the RCA, and the first would be: Will the national program adequately address the needs in Mississippi for the next 5 years? And I think that it will, provided it is adequately funded. And I think all down through the testimony that you have already had, and the other statements that you will hear, is that funding is going to be the key to get the job done.

The second point would be: Should the States be assuming more of a role in conservation treatment? And, certainly, I would have to agree that that is on the positive side—the States should. And the State's cost-sharing efforts should be in-kind payments by paying the salaries for more technical personnel that can work out on the farm with the farmers in putting in these conservation practices. But I would also have to add that, based upon present economic conditions, I don't envision any additional funding from the State level for conservation efforts in the next few years.

Another point: Is the proposed national funding level adequate? And I would have to say no, that it is not at the present level. We have identified and recommended a 5-year program. But it has been funded at about 50 percent of the money needed to carry it out. The cost-share funds should be doubled.

Think with me then about priorities: What are the priorities for conservation work needed in Mississippi? I would say, No. 1, that we should reduce excessive soil erosion by helping landowners apply and maintain conservation systems on agricultural lands that are now eroding excessively. And we have many ways in which we can do that, whether it's planting forests, planting trees, or going back to grass and putting it in pasture. On cultivatable land that is best suited to row crops, certainly overfall pipes going into the streams, and any of these best-management practices that have been recommended by the studies that have gone into this would certainly be important in reducing excessive soil erosion.

How do we reduce upstream flood damage? We do it through structural and nonstructural methods with emphasis on nonstructural methods, because any time that you build a dam and back water up, or you build a gulley plug or whatever it might be, then you are going to use up available supplies and available land. But, through nonstructural methods, whether it's planting trees or improving it through pastures or wetland areas or whatever it might be, it's certainly all important.

How do you improve water quality? By applying the knowledge through determining the relationship between soil erosion and water pollution. And certainly, in our area, most of the water pollution does come from nonpoint source simply because of the rainfall or the heavy rainfall and especially in the last few months, the tremendous oversupply of water that we have had in the last few days.

Another point we would like to speak to: Are conservation efforts keeping up with today's needs in Mississippi? And I would say definitely not. For years it looked as though we were winning the battle against erosion. Many of you are familiar with the Yazoo-Little Tallahatchie Watershed Area on which pine trees were planted some 30-odd years ago and it was doing a good job in that area. We saw a move toward more grasslands or cattle production. But higher prices that were being paid for soybeans back in the seventies caused thousands of acres of land that were protected by forests or by pastures that were plowed up for soybean production almost overnight erosion once again took its toll of thousands of acres. And this was in sheet erosion as well as rill erosion because of the high amounts of rainfall that we received. In many areas of this State this condition still exists. And I think that you will see a program ongoing in Mississippi that will have its kickoff meeting this Friday which is called the HOT program instituted by the Governor along with many other agencies which is called hold our topsoil program in which demonstration farms, and we're going to be working on Mr. Mashburn's farm to begin with, this Friday in a program. He is a good conservation farmer. He just happened to have acquired a piece of land that had not been treated as well as he knows how to do it, and you can look for great improvements in the efforts on that farm to use it as a demonstration farm, and we thank Robert for that. But as I said, in many areas of the State we still have a serious problem because of the fact that lands have been plowed up that are too steep a grade. And as a result of this we have serious erosion.

Another point: Will targeting help achieve more conservation in Mississippi? And I think it will. I think that where you have your targeting and giving assistance to critial areas where it's needed most, that you are going to have a good bit of work done in those areas because the people are going to have the funding levels that they need in cost-sharing efforts. I think the greatest conservationists that you have in all areas would be your farmers because they know the value of keeping their farmland intact and not seeing it washoff down the river. Targeting funds I think at the present time are adequate for those particular areas. But as you spread these critical areas around we are going to find a need for more funding.

Another point: Are the six long-term objectives set at USDA in line with needs? I think yes, that they are. The six points that have been spelled out in the Resource Conservation Act, they are in line with needs. They are aimed at maintaining and improving the resource productivity of the land that's available. They are objectives that all of us in agriculture should strive to attain.

Another point: Are ongoing conservation efforts in Mississippi effective? And I will have to give you a qualified "yes" for that answer. They are effective only when farmers are convinced by some type of an educational program—and I think that the key to the total erosion program is education—that a conservation system will not cost more than they can afford to pay, that conservation efforts will improve their farm income and that these efforts are for the good of all their people.

Another point: Should USDA put any constraints on other USDA programs that tend to create erosion problems? And I would have to say that our organization is very definitely against cross-compliance, that you have to comply with one program in order to qualify for the benefits of another program. But I think that it would not be beyond reason to expect that, say, Farmers Home borrowers would be required to have a farm conservation plan. This is one area that if they take the plan, as they review the plan, they are going to see the benefits that come to them even though they may be short on funds in their farming operation. But economics are going to determine when certain portions of a conservation system should be installed. I mentioned earlier overfall pipes. Certainly in some areas this is one method of saving a tremendous amount of soil erosion. There are many other methods that could be instituted, no-till planting for crops certainly has a great potential for this.

One last point under the RCA proposal: Is water quality, forestry, and other resources like wetlands receiving enough emphasis? I think that if we accomplish all the other objectives set forth by the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act, the major recipients of the benefits of this program will be water quality. I think we will achieve that level of water quality. I think that we will see forestry growing again, and that we will see many reforestation programs enacted that's going to see that we will have this renewable resource in the forefront in the future. And I think that wetlands and wildlife will benefit from all these programs in whatever area it might be. And certainly, when we talk about wetlands and wildlife, we think about ducks and also you think about all the other game animals and all the other things that are maybe getting to be extinct or whatever. But all of these are important to society as we know it today.

I have only given you a brief overview of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation's position as it relates to the RCA.

You are well aware that our State is losing an average of 10.6 tons of soil per acre from cropland per year. I can't place enough emphasis on the seriousness of this problem. Through the Soil and Water Conservation Act, we hope to turn this situation around.

My detailed statement for the record will be mailed to each of you at a later date so that it might be included.

I want to thank you for the concerns that you have and that we as farmers have as we produce the food and fiber for this Nation. And I especially appreciate the opportunity to present these views to you today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Arant. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for giving me the chance to ask a few questions at this point. I wonder in assessing the activities of the Soil Conservation Service, would you say that the activities of that agency are directed to the areas of greatest need, and if not, what suggestions would you have about targeting activities by the Soil Conservation Service to help solve some of these eorosion problems? Mr. Mashburn, would you like to respond to that?

Mr. MASHBURN. Yes, sir. I think they are very adequate in the cases that I know about. They do a real good job. And the only thing I want to see is the SCS kept here to give us this technical assistance. I have built several miles of terraces and without their assistance, I just couldn't do it. And I have also served on the ASCS county committee for 9 years, and I know that other farmers would participate more if we had more funds for them to cost share on building terraces and sediment control structures and overfall pipes and such as you have just discussed. I like the program just like it is. I just want it funded.

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Fisher, what is your reaction?

Mr. FISHER. Well, I need to ask you to amplify your question again. As I understood it, you said is the Soil Conservation Service providing the help, technical assistance, and everything we need today or should they target it a little more?

Senator COCHRAN. Are they working in the right areas?

Mr. FISHER. I have no concern or question about that whatsoever. In fact, I would discourage any thoughts of targeting their approach. I think within the service that we are getting through the soil conservation district and the Soil Conservation Service, we obviously do target. You used a reference to the YLT there. That's a perfect example of that. But to say from the outside that we need to target more to get a better job done, I wouldn't agree to that. I think there's no need for it. I will just put it that way.

Senator COCHRAN. What about the ASCS and its role in soil conservation? Should there be any changes in direction or the emphasis of ASCS programs to help improve our response to soil and water conservation problems?

Mr. FISHER. Can I respond to that for the benefit of Senator Jepsen? I think we in the State of Mississippi must be too poor to argue with each other. We all work very closely together. I think I heard that question asked earlier. And working for many years on the side of the soil conservation district, there has never been any conflict with soil conservation district service and the ASCS, or, for that matter, with farm organizations like the Delta Council, Farm Bureau, or whatever. I think that we in the State of Mississippi are blessed with a group that works very closely together for the common good.

Mr. DAVIDSON. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Senator COCHRAN. I think you probably were here when Commissioner Jim "Buck" Ross and Hobson Gary were responding to questions about setting up a coordinating board for handling of any new funds in a block grant fashion. Do you agee with them that this would be an unnecessary new layer of bureaucracy to have to deal with?

Mr. MASHBURN. I agree we don't need it, all we need is the funds like I said a while ago. It hurt me to serve on that committee and have to turn people down on these cost-sharing practices because we did not have the funds. We've got people that want to do this conservation work, but they just don't feel that they can do it by themselves.

Senator COCHRAN. How effective would tax incentives be, Mr. Arant? There's been some conversation about tax credits and investment tax credits and other kinds of writeoffs that you would give a farmer if he would invest money in doing certain kinds of things on his land. Would this be effective?

Mr. **Arant**. Senator, I think under normal conditions that it would be effective. But under present-day conditions, I don't think it will because he doesn't need any more tax writeoff. He's not making any profit as it is, so that would sort of be just extra paperwork or things of that sort. So actually what he needs is that the local ASC officers need more funds that they can allocate to each area. So that—I believe they generally use all the funds that are available to them because the interested farmers or producers use up those funds. I think one area that was commented earlier about the Soil Conservation Service—I think we have a good system set up as it is. I think that the biggest problem is a lack of funding as we do not have technical assistance in every area or every county. We have found five of them having to work two or three counties, the technical conservationists. So as a result of this, they don't get to supply all the needs that the people have. But as far as tax incentives—I have gone around the bush a little bit on that—but as far as tax incentives, I don't think that under present conditions that that is going to be of any help.

Mr. **Davidson**. Be sure and put a 10-year carry-forward provision in there if you follow that.

Senator **Cochran**. Back in April, Senator Jepsen and I were joined by some 16 other U.S. Senators in sending a letter to Secretary John Block urging that a conservation PIK program be considered for implementing in conjunction with this acreage diversion program that's in effect now, actually providing an additional incentive for conservation practices on these idle acres. Are you satisfied that there will be conservation practices undertaken by farmers on the idle acres, and is the program as implemented sufficient, or do we need the added emphasis or incentive of a payment in kind for conservation?

Mr. **Arant**. If I could respond—you are talking about the "Son of PIK" program, is that right?

Senator **Cochran**. That's right. It seems it's now being called "Son of PIK."

Mr. **Arant**. But whatever it's called, I definitely think that there needs to be some incentive. We are seeing so many acres of land today that are just idle right now. Certainly the tremendous amount of moisture that we've had has prevented them from doing anything to it. But I think that by the end of the year you are going to see some of that natural cover that's still out there, and that is one of the points that can be used by farmers on the diverted land or the conserving acres, is that they can use natural cover. But we are going to see a tremendous weed problem develop because of all the excess seed that is going to be produced on these lands. And it will even move over onto your cultivatable land, not just those conserving acres. I think that if farmers were offered some payment-in-kind type of a program, that they would use more conserving acre crops. They can plant some of those crops now, but that's dead expense to them. And when they look at it and with the financial situation of quite a few of our producers, they are not going to be able to do that.

Mr. **Davidson**. All of this is very expensive. It doesn't matter it's summer or winter cover crops. And all of our native grasses are weeds. They are plants out of place. As Hugh said, we don't need any more seed. We have all—Iowa sent all those seeds down along with it. We just don't need any more seed. And we need an expensive cover crop that will cover both summer and winter because we are subject to erosion 12 months out of the year and organic matter decomposes 11 months out of the year. We don't have a deep-frozen soil in the winter where the decomposition ceases. It is going on at least 11 months out of the year and some years it's 12 months.

Mr. **Mashburn**. May I respond to that? Earlier when Commissioner Ross talked you asked him about a mandatory program.

Senator **Cochran**. If you are going to participate in the program.

Mr. **Mashburn**. Right. I am very much opposed to the word "mandatory." But I think farmers will respond if they have a program that will be beneficial to them. For instance, the PIK program, the idle acres that's left out on my farm this year—I had one field that had 200 and something acres, 251, I believe. But we already had a program that I could go in there and put terraces, water retention structures so that when this program is over, I can go back and farm that profitably, I hope, and with conserving the soil at the same time. This allowed me to do it, and there's already a program there to do it.

Mr. **Davidson**. The aid allocation in most counties is taken up in the first week, so you really need a line there. There's just no proximity to an adequate funding for the present programs.

Senator **Cochran**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Senator. We are about ready to take a half-hour break here. And before we do, I might summarize today what we have heard. Certainly these panel folks really know how to hurt a guy reminding me of all this Iowa soil down here. I'm glad you said we sent our weed seeds down with it. I feel very comfortable.

I do note that this panel seems to be lined up here heavily to the right, which is very comfortable and makes me feel at home. I notice that the left chair ins't used at all. Mr. Davidson, you have really done your homework with references that go way back 45 year ago. You mentioned things here that we had heard here earlier this morning and that we have here in our questions and that I have seen in reports just recently. Reminds me of the story that was told about the old southern general that one time was asked by the press when he came out of a planning meeting for some comments, and he wouldn't give them away. And they kept pursuing him and pushing him. And he said, "Well, I'll tell you something." "Yes," he said, "I have a comment for you." He said, "I will tell you what went on in there." He said, "There's some things that were said in there that were true, and there's some things that were said in there that were new. But those that were true weren't necessarily new and those that were new weren't necessarily true."

I think a lot of this stuff applies to the OMB today, and the fact that the statements that were made 45 years ago were just as right on today as they were at that time. Absentee ownership is not healthy for soil conservation—I heard someone say that. I also heard one of the panelists say that when you do go to targeting, be very careful: be very careful how you attack the soil conservation problem lest you penalize the long-range overall program by taking funds from the long-range programs to put them in the targeting, I heard that and made notes of it. 1983 appropriations be doubled, I also heard that.

Senator Cochran. I heard that also.

Mr. Davidson. I want to call to your attention that someone else said they should be doubled.

Senator Cochran. That's the first time that you and Hugh Arant have agreed on anything. [Laughter.]

Mr. Davidson. I want that to go in the record, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Jepsen. In any event, I want to thank all of you for your testimony. It was very refreshing and very candid to hear testimony from folks who are on the firing line. You probably know John DeGroda of Iowa, the Soybean Association folks. I stayed with him 2 weeks ago overnight and helped him feed his cattle in the morning. Needless to say we talked a lot about soybeans. This is the soybean folks of Iowa. I appreciate the job that the Soybean Association has done over the years in providing for action and selling your products and your research and development and doing things for yourselves. I think you have shown a good example for other associations and other pea-grains.

Mr. Mashburn. We may have done a little good of a job on that.

Senator Jepsen. Well, in any event, I do appreciate your participation here today, and look forward to any additional comments you may have. Senator Cochran, as chairman of the Subcommittee for Appropriations for Agriculture is certainly the right person to express your desire to for additional funds.

Mr. Davidson. No one has brought attention to the fact that Government programs has expedited this great loss. I know all of you remember Mr. Butz' statement to "plant fence row to fence row; we will always have a market for our products." Now he didn't say what the cost for that market would be. In tons of soil, in dollars of farmer equity—it's just not worth it. We should put first things first. And we are very late in starting.

Senator Cochran. Thank you very much.

Senator Jepsen. We will now take a recess for 30 minutes.

[AFTER RECESS]

Senator Jepsen. I have been asked to announce that anyone who has not signed the roster—Mr. Newman has it here, and if you will just let him know so we can get this list complete. At this time I will now call panel No. 3, the resource users. Senator Cochran, you know these people. Would you mind introducing them and bringing them up?

Senator Cochran. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have Dorothy Butts from the Vicksburg area; Braxton Bullock who is a member of our State ASCS committee; J. C. Whitehead of Tupelo; Jack Lilley from Jackson; Robert Morrow from Brandon; and Gus Evans from Shuqualak. If you all would come up and take your place at the witness table. We would appreciate it very much.

Senator Jepsen. I tell you, I wouldn't have been able to pronounce where Mr. Evans is from.

Mr. Evans. You say it just like it's spelled.

Senator Jepsen. Does that have some particular meaning?

Mr. Evans. It depends on which Choctaw you believe: one is "stately waters," and the other is "wider branches."

Senator Jepsen. That's very interesting.

Senator Cochran. Why don't we just start here with Mrs. Butts? We will have you lead off.

Senator Jepsen. May I ask you please to take the microphone and set it in front of whoever is giving their testimony.

STATEMENT OF DOROTHY BUTTS, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

Mrs. Butts. Thank you, Senator Jepsen and Senator Cochran. I am Dorothy Butts, a soil and water conservation district commissioner. I own and operate a farm in the southernmost part of the Mississippi Delta. I grew up in the foothills of Warren County and own property there. Therefore, I am aware of the problems of both areas.

As was stated in the RCA report, American farmers have an unparalleled record of production. This production record was made by individual farmers on privately owned lands. It was made sometimes in spite of Government regulations. Farmers perform best as a competitive and independent people. I therefore oppose any move to usurp the right of the farmer and the soil and water conservation district to make decisions on the local level. We already have the necessary framework in the local district and the State soil and water conservation commission to work effectively. It is my opinion that more boards, either appointed by the Governor or the Secretary of Agriculture, would only add more cost and bureaucracy to overcome to get the job done.

The problems of soil and water conservation are far reaching and will have an effect on the Nation for generations to come. The projects needed to solve these problems are too large and costly to be borne by the landowner or the State. The problem is national in scope. The cost must be borne by the Federal Government. I am thinking particularly of watershed projects where the cost is prohibitive for an individual farmer. Neither should cost/benefit ratio be part of the criteria for such projects.

How can anyone put a dollar value on an eroded hillside or an acre of cropland if in the future years it will cause flood problems or silt over creek bottom pasture lands?

All phases of conservation are so closely interwoven that one cannot be neglected without causing damage to the other.

How can the Secretary of Agriculture put the conservation of soil as the No. 1 priority and at the same time decrease watershed and flood prevention programs? Watersheds and control of runoff are basic to soil conservation. Even though I farm in the delta, I believe that watershed work should have the highest priority in Mississippi. This would incorporate not only structures, but terraces, forestry, and other practices suitable for rolling or hill lands. If you can control or slow down runoff, you prevent soil erosion, siltation, and greatly reduce flooding.

In the delta also, emphasis on water management should be directed toward control of water, rather than purely drainage. Slowing down runoff would not only prevent much soil loss, but it would help replenish the underground water supply. In any water use plan, agriculture should have high priority.

Targeting critical resource problem areas to receive extra assistance is an admirable goal, but not at the reduction of base level assistance. I can concur with targeting, only if the assistance is over and above base level assistance. Anything less than this is undermining the program.

I oppose the change in the eligibility requirements for loans from Farmers Home Administration.

SCS is a voluntary program and should remain so.

I oppose the inclusion of improvement of fish and wildlife habitat as a SCS priority. I am not opposed to fish and wildlife. Good conservation practices enhance their habitat. This should be a product, and not a goal in itself. There are other State and Federal agencies dedicated to their protection and well-being. Let all available soil and water conservation funds be used for the purpose for which it was formed—that of saving soil and water.

The most flagrant violator of soil and water is the U.S. Corps of Engineers. The corps has ditched, channeled, leveed, and spoiled more land than Soil Conservation Service can ever restore. Their work has been done without concern for conservation practices. There is no way farmers can carry out the edicts of the EPA to reduce nonpoint sources of agricultural pollution without having input in the corps' projects.

I urge you, Senator Jepsen and Senator Cochran, along with the Secretary of Agriculture, to take the necessary action to see that SCS has an input in every project of the Corps of Engineers.

I thank you for the opportunity to express some of my concerns about soil and water conservation.

One thing I would like to comment on, Senator Cochran. I disagree that a tax incentive would not help. I think it would be very helpful. Farmers like to cry broke, but they aren't all broke, and I think that it would do a great deal of good. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you. Braxton Bullock.

STATEMENT OF BRAXTON BULLOCK, MEMBER, ASCS STATE COMMITTEE

Mr. BULLOCK. First of all, I would like to say I am Braxton Bullock from Jefferson Davis County; I am on the ASCS State committe, a soybean grower. Thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of the farmers and landowners of south Mississippi. The following are statements of the views of my fellow farmers and landowners concerning conservation issues which most concern us.

Overall, we feel the national program for soil and water conservation will adequately meet the conseravtion needs in Mississippi for the next few years. We do not think the States should be given more of a role in conservation treatment. We want the leading role of program development and administration to remain with local USDA officials and other local groups such as the soil conservation district commissioners and the farmer-elected agricultural stabilization and conservation county committees.

The proposed national funding level does not seem to be adequate to meet the ever-increasing conservation needs of this area.

We feel more emphasis should be placed on encouraging no till and minimum till farming practices. Also, high priority should be given to the establishment of permanent vegetative cover on critically eroded areas and the installation of sediment control and retention structures on severe gullies.

Farmers of my area are becoming more aware of the need for conserving their soil. They are beginning to sacrifice optimum yields if necessary to reduce the erosion of their precious topsoil. Existing conservation programs of USDA have been instrumental in portraying this point of view.

We feel the targeting of funds would cause a surplus of funds in some areas. Because of this, some less cost-efficient conservation practices might be carried out in these areas and leave some more critical conservation problems untreated in other areas where funds are limited.

We feel that all USDA programs should be coordinated to promote conservation, but not to the extent that the effectiveness of any one program would suffer.

We would like to see less emphasis given to water quality and wetlands and more emphasis given to cropland erosion and forestry problems.

We would like to reemphasize our belief that the development and administration of any conservation programs should be left to local USDA and farmer groups. These local people have a genuine concern and understanding of the conservation problems of their area. Also, they are capable of seeing that those problems are solved in the most cost-efficient manner. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Bullock. We next have Jack Lilley.

STATEMENT OF JACK LILLEY, CHAIRMAN, HINDS COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND CHAIRMAN, JACKSON FEDERAL LAND BANK ASSOCIATION

Mr. LILLEY. Thank you, Senator Jepsen and Senator Cochran. I am Jack Lilley, a farmer in Hinds County. I am chairman of the Hinds Country Soil Conservation District and chairman of the Jackson Federal Land Bank Association. I am past president of the Mississippi Assocation of Conservation Districts. I appreciate the invitation to appear before this committee and to discuss our soil and water conservation needs with you.

Due to the limited amount of time, I want to confine my remarks to a few points that I am especially concerned about. I am concerned about the direction that our national conservation program is going. The responsibility for soil and water conservation does not rest entirely upon the individual that tills the land, nor does it rest upon those States that have large agriculture areas such as Mississippi. Conservation is the responsibility of every American. The nonfarm people who depend on the farmer must realize that they have a responsibility to assist the farmer in taking care of our natural resources for present and future generations.

According to a nationwide survey that was made in 1979, the majority of the people surveyed fully support the Federal Government sharing the cost of soil and water conservation. I believe that it is essential that the Federal Government more adequately fund the soil and water conservation program for the Nation. I do not believe that we can afford a reduction in Federal funds for conservation.

I think that it is good to look to State government for support and leadership, but we must not reduce Federal funds until we are sure that State funds are available. In my 25 years as a soil conservation district board member, I have seen the results of local leadership and Federal agencies working together in conservation.

We have a good system, we just need to expand and improve it. The quickest way to kill a conservation program is to take away the local staff that is provided by the Soil Conservation Service.

I believe one of the best investments we can make for the future is to have more adequate Federal Government funding for conservation programs. In addition to cost-sharing funds, the farmer must have technical assistance available to help plan and apply a conservation program on his farm. During the past several years, we have seen a decrease in technical assistance throughout the State. The Soil Conservation Service is the agency that we look to for this assistance, but they cannot do this if their staff continues to decrease. Farmers all over Mississippi realize the necessity of applying conservation practices, but they must have the technical guidance.

I have a concern on the targeting of funds. While this concept sounds good, it also raises some questions. The only way that I could support the targeting is if there are additional funds appropriated for these areas. I do not feel that we can afford to give up personnel in one district in order to accelerate the program in a county with a greater erosion problem. It is my opinion that you will see these district boards become inactive and this in turn will lend to an inadequate conservation program. In other words, those areas with a low soil loss will soon become one of the areas needing additional funds.

Let me make a point concerning the value of a conservation program to all of us. Up until the last few years, farmers have been able to maintain or improve crop production by fertilizing, improving pest control, and plant varieties. This has adversely affected our ability to sell the value of soil and water conservation to farmers.

During this period we have lost two-thirds of our topsoil on most of the hill cropland in Mississippi. With this soil resource base gone, the farmer is in real trouble. We know that one of the primary reasons for farmers doing this is economics. Have you ever thought how much more yield there would be if the soil had its original topsoil as compared to the soil with most of it eroded away? For some soil, this could mean two or three times more production. My point is, an applied conservation program on the land is essential to make income and profit. From society's viewpoint, I disagree with those who say conservation doesn't pay. There is no visible alternative to conservation of the Nation's soil and water resources. I also disagree with some people in that I believe we presently have the technology and know-how to do this. However, to get the job done will require all of our best efforts.

Gentleman, I don't believe anybody knows what the dollar value of a ton of topsoil is. As far as I am concerned, if we consider the fact that it is lost forever, it is priceless. We do know that erosion or soil loss is expensive and present and future generations will pay the price. Example: We pay $500 million a year just to remove sediment from our waterways. We pay additional millions to remove sediment from roads, drains, and culverts, and to clean up drinking water supply. We lose swimming, fishing, and other recreational opportunities. The failure to control soil erosion on agriculture land in this Nation could double the cost of producing food and fiber over the next 50 years without regard to inflation or other factors. These are just examples of the dollar cost of soil erosion. The cost to the physical well-being of our people is much greater.

Thank you for your interest in soil and water conservation and for giving us the opportunity to appear before you today.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Jack. We now have Robert D. Morrow, Jr.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT D. MORROW, JR., BRANDON, MISS.

Mr. MORROW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senator Cochran. I am Robert D. Morrow, Jr., landowner and farmer from Rankin County, Miss. I own and operate a beef cattle and pine timber farm in cooperation with my father and brother. This 3,300-acre ranch has approximately 2,700 acres of pine timber production and the balance in cattle production. I have been a member of the Rankin County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Commissioners in excess of 25 years, and a past president of the Mississippi Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

We have a very active district. Our commissioners meet on a monthly basis, and just recently we have purchased a terracing plow at the cost of approximately $5,000 to make available to the operators in our district. The demand for this plow has been such that we are now considering the purchase of a second terracing plow.

I appreciate this opportunity to appear at this hearing and to make the following statements concerning the proposed national program for soil and water conservation.

Of the issues which you specifically requested input, I would like to state that I feel the States should assume more of a role in funding conservation treatment. In Mississippi, I feel this will be particularly difficult because of the economic structure of the State and because of the many traditional barriers to overcome as it relates to views of the citizens of Mississippi about increasing taxes in order to generate the State support for conservation programs. I feel that this can be achieved in Mississippi. However, it would take many years to fully put this concept into effect. Therefore, I firmly believe that while we can and should be working toward development of State revenues to support the conservation effort, Federal money must be relied on for several years to come to maintain the momentum that has been developed over the years toward treating our conservation problems in the State while the State and local support is being developed. I feel that the proposed national funding level for soil conservation is not adequate to meet the conservation needs in Mississippi.

I have collected historical data relative to the funding levels of the soil conservation service in Mississippi. These funding levels have been dramatically decreased over the last several years. A continuation of this dramatic decrease in funding levels cannot be continued at its present rate. The current need for conservation work in Mississippi is primarily that of erosion control and control of water. In Mississippi, the Soil Conservation Service and the soil conservation districts are concentrating on the treatment of sloping cropland. I support this concept and I feel that it is appropriate.

I do feel that the national program for soil conservation must recognize the fact that in Mississippi our resource problems are best addressed by the watershed program which is made available through the USDA Soil Conservation Service. This watershed program enables not only individuals to perform land treatment so as to control erosion, but it also enables groups of people to work together on problems which would be much too big for any one individual to try to handle and install structural measures which will aid in the control of water.

As I am sure you are aware, with the severe flooding that has been experienced in Mississippi the last 6 months, that control of water is of the utmost importance within the State. The watershed program is a very valuable tool which can be made available to local groups in order to control water on a local basis. Control of water has a very significant impact on control of erosion. I believe the targeting concept which is being implemented within the Soil Conservation Service and, as expressed in the national program for soil and water conservation, in theory is good; however, I must say that I feel the targeting concept must be implemented with additional funds over and above the basic funding level needed to maintain a presence in each county in the United States and to provide the very minimum basic assistance to landowners in each county in the United States to work their conservation needs.

I understand and support the idea that where the needs are the greatest, the greatest attention needs to be focused. I think this program can be implemented, but it must be implemented with additional funds. I feel the concept of cross compliance or, stated another way, the constraints placed on other USDA programs has a great deal of merit. I feel that cross compliance should be incorporated into other USDA programs to the extent that basic soil and water conservation principles are honored. I feel that, if cross compliance is initiated as it relates to the practice of basic soil and water conservation principles, that this concept must be phased in, because to implement it at one time would create such a tremendous workload that the demand could not be met in a timely fashion.

In our district of Rankin County, I don't think we have the personnel or the time to prepare a plan, for example, for everyone that gets a loan from Farmers Home Administration. I think we could take care of them on some basis that might cover the need over a period of years. But to do it all at one time would not be practical.

The national program for soil and water conservation is needed and, as presented, reflects many good concepts. I feel that, above all, the local people must always retain the right to place the conservation emphasis to problems which are present in their county, and I believe the national soil conservation program offers the latitude for each county to address their particular needs with the inclusion of the points that I have just discussed.

Again, let me thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee today.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Robert, we appreciate it. Mr. J. C. Whitehead from Tupelo, welcome.

STATEMENT OF J. C. WHITEHEAD, TUPELO, MISS.

Mr. WHITEHEAD. Mr. Chairman and Senator Cochran, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am J. C. Whitehead, from Tupelo, Lee County, Miss. I have been a Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District commissioner for a number of years. However, my primary business is banking. I am the CEO of a bank with locations across north Mississippi. We work the top one-third of the State excluding the Mississippi Delta. Let me say at the onset, Senator Jepsen, I believe in the free market system with minimum controls on people who are performing various economic enterprises. But I also feel that perhaps we are approaching a situation that it is time for a new look at what is happening to us across the Nation in soil erosion.

Since many of the points have been repetitive, let me seize two or three that I believe are important to cover. There are many changes taking place in banking and the thing that strikes me that I frequently see is that desperate men use desperate measures. There are many things that occur in banking that, because of desperation, people do. There are things that happen in agriculture done by men who are hanging on by their fingernails and attempting to survive. Survival for people engaged in agriculture has been extremely difficult. As has been said earlier, because of high commodity prices, for instance in soybeans and because of low cattle prices, we had an influx of people into soybean farming. This meant that land was taken out faster—some of our timberland—that should never have occurred. We have marginal farmers as well as marginal land. Although not all of the erosion that has taken place is a result of these marginal operations, I do believe that a great percentage of it has taken place at these locations. Prosperous people and efficient, prosperous farmers generally follow fairly good conservation measures, from my observation over a number of years.

I would talk about maybe three points: one is soil loss on sloping cropland, the other is flooding and water quality, and perhaps the other is drainage. One thing I noted with the divergence of people we had here from the various parts of Mississippi, your views and your opinions as to what should be done somewhat vary depending on your location. It's obvious that our needs in the hill section of Mississippi do not coincide with those of the delta. If this is true for Mississippi, I can see how difficult it is over these United States to develop a program of consistency in the way you deal with people.

I think we have some peculiar problems in Lee County that for an area of northeast Mississippi perhaps are peculiar and should be dealt with on that basis. You would know that I am prejudiced, but I do believe that the present group of people that are in force, such as the ASC committees, the soil and water conservation district commissioners—groups that have been in place for a long time. And I think they have the capacities to administer programs that deal directly with our farm people. It is extremely important to preserve this experience that is long standing.

One of the things that I didn't say—again, I see no progress in dealing with loss of soil on sloping land. As someone has said earlier, it certainly has become aggravated in the last 10 years. We are in as poor a position with the loss of soil on sloping lands as we were 10 years ago. And I can see no reversal in the present RCA program. It would appear to me that some distinction and a clear distinction should be made on marginal land that should never have been in cultivation to start with, that either a penalty or whatever incentives that are offered should not be offered to people who are in this particular situation. Certain practices such as minimum till or no till are obviously important to us in conservation farming. And I think that this is the kind of thing that should receive some kind of reward if we are going to encourage farmers to use this tillage practice.

In flood and flood damage to the land, roads, buildings, bridges in our area, let me talk a moment about Public Law 566 that I think has been extremely beneficial to us. In our area, structures have been important. We have one creek, Chiwappa Creek, that we have effectively in place, a system that I personally believe is doing a tremendous job in flood control in our area. It is alleviating the silting of our bottom lands where we have most of our valuable agricultural lands. In Lee County and much of our area, fertile bottom lands are where our good row-crop land is, and it's important that we protect this particular land. I do deplore the absence of structures. I think structures are important in controlling flooding. It is an interesting concept to recognize that with the small number of people engaged in agriculture—I hear various figures, 3 or 4 percent, whatever—it's obvious that their political influence has been waning for a long time and is certainly not very strong at the moment unless the other part of the population realizes what is happening. I do think there has been poor communication on the part of a lot of us who are engaged in this business to make the right kind of appeal to the metropolitan people who dwell in towns and cities of this country. I know in Tupelo there has been considerable benefit from the Public Law 566 programs that have alleviated flooding. I know the board of supervisors and their ability to maintain roads and bridges—this has been enhanced and improved tremendously. I think that sort of thing has not been communicated to the degree that it gets the kind of support from the voting public that it ought to.

Let me mention briefly the water management district created some years ago in the Tombigbee Basin. I'm sure, Senator Jepsen, you have heard of the Tombigbee before. We have created a 12-county organization for the purpose of improving the utilization of water within that basin. Originally we kept the ad valorum tax, general property tax that had been assessed by the State and that allowed us to do some things. For example, we assisted the Soil Conservation Service in planning for various watershed programs. I think we have been instrumental in helping that sort of program. I do think that we can get local support from people like this and groups who can see the advantage of working within a particular river basin. I think as many of us thought 25 or 30 years ago, the river basin is a way to look at how to solve some of these problems. If you have people with a community of interest, they will work together. I think if we agree on the point that if I damage my neighbor I have some responsibility. If I follow practices that allow soil erosion and loss of soil on my land that goes down on my neighbor, I have some responsibility in that. There is a considerable difference of opinion as to how much that is. But I do feel strongly that there is some.

One of the things that has been in the RCA program that has great value in public appeal is water quality, availability of water. In our area, the underground water supply—and this is unusual for Mississippi—we have only recently recognized that we are facing water shortages or an absence of underground water to meet the demands. I live in a county that is the third county in industrial employment in Mississippi. And this kind of thing is important if we are going to continue the expansion of industry. To make additional jobs for people, it is essential that we have enough water to supply the population and the industry. We do not have in our underground water supply sufficient water to do this. So the amount and quality of water available to us suddenly becomes very important. To me, this is the kind of thing that should be emphasized and related. We are missing an opportunity to recognize that the metropolitan population of our State and of our country have a big stake in this particular area.

As a third item, drainage is important to us. And this has been aggravated by, perhaps, the other two items, by soil loss and flooding. This has also precipitated drainage problems or aggravated a problem that is of extreme importance. I see in the RCA program there is not very much attention to drainage, or the amount of technical personnel needed to perform this particular function.

Unfortunately, not all activities that are undertaken are correctly coordinated. As someone mentioned earlier the Corps of Engineers—I have many personal friends in the corps—and they are very capable people, but they can be misguided. For example, we have a creek known as 20-Mile Creek that was included in some works of improvement on the tributaries of the Tombigbee that was approved by Congress a number of years ago. This has been funded at various times; 20-Mile Creek was straightened and improved so that there was a straight chute of water for about 20 or 25 miles. And that has created some horrendous problems with silting and just too much water being drastically taken off of the watershed and being delivered down on the floodplain. This has just resulted in disasters to people. It's obvious that someone should have known better than this kind of thing. We do need better coordination of activities.

Senator Jepsen and Senator Cochran thank you for allowing me to appear before you, and for your interest in soil conservation in Mississippi.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Whitehead. Gus Evans.

STATEMENT OF A. T. "GUS" EVANS, NOXUBEE COUNTY, MISS.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you, Senator Cochran. I am Gus Evans, a farmer from Noxubee County which is in extreme east central Mississippi.[1] I appreciate you all being here today and giving me the opportunity to appear at this hearing and make a statement about the soil and water conservation program.

Much has been said about the condition in Mississippi pertaining to this problem of erosion and soil and water control. And many of the statements I am going to make, being this near the end of the program, have already been made several times about this. But if we look at this, we think back to the public. And since there has been efforts to conserve our soil and water resources for about 40 years, it is difficult for the public to understand why we have such a big conservation problem today. Of course, there have been many reasons for this. Up until this time, there has never been a national soil and water conservation program. And the Federal Government has certainly not been consistent in its agricultural policies. You will recall that only a few years ago the farmers were encouraged to grow crops and and plow the land from fence row to fence row. In fact, at one point we had a farm program which said you could not put a conserving practice on land that qualified for set-aside. Another reason is that farmers have been in a real economic squeeze for the past several years. The cost of production has increased while the economic returns have decreased. The farmer has been forced to maximize production by expanding their operations. This has resulted in a lot of land that was once protected by vegetative cover being plowed up and put into row crops. And much of this land was unsuited for row crop production and much of it did not have the conservation treatment applied that was needed to protect it from erosion. I believe that most farmers would like to protect their land, but simply do not have the funds needed to apply the conservation treatment.

It is very important that it be recognized that the responsibility for soil and water conservation does not rest entirely upon the individuals that till the land. It is the responsibility of every American because the funds invested in conservation will primarily benefit society and future generations. According to a nationwide survey that we made in 1979, the majority of people surveyed fully support the Federal Government sharing the cost of a soil and water conservation program. An increase in Federal funds is essential to implement the needed soil and water conservation program.

In addition to cost sharing funds, the farmer must have technical assistance available to help him plan and apply a conservation program on his farm. The Soil Conservation Service is the primary agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides such assistance. Since 1976 the total personnel employed by the SCS has been reduced by 140. This is a very unfortunate circumstance in that we have farmers all over the State of Mississippi who are ready to do conservation work, but simply do not have the technical assistance available to help them.

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[1] See p. 371 for the prepared statement of Mr. Evans.

With this little bit of a background, I would like to comment on a few specific features of the RCA soil and water conservation program. It is important to note that 86 percent of the public response in Mississippi supported the continuation of the current program. The public support and opposition of the 20 features of the program were divided about equal. This pretty well expresses my own opinion about the program which is to say that some of the features of it are desirable, and in others, some changes are needed.

One of the features that I do not agree with is the targeting of funds to designated areas. I agree that the first priority should be given to erosion control in Mississippi; however, there is a soil erosion problem in each soil and water conservation district or county in the State. As I have previously indicated, the financial and technical assistance that we have is just not adequate in the State now. It really doesn't make any difference whether in any given district or county that 50,000 acres or 10,000 acres of severely eroding cropland in a county if only a small protion of this can be adequately treated annually with the present assistance available. As long as there is a workload in a county, it doesn't seem reasonable to decrease assistance just because there is a more work to be done in other areas. In fact, if you go with the targeting problem, it would seem that the poorer steward you have been of the soil throughout the years the greater is going to be your reward. Let me use my own county of Noxubee as an example. The average annual soil loss of cropland in my county is about average for the State. It is not presently in a targeted area. Yet we could use a minimum of two or three times the technical and financial assistance that we have been receiving to control these problems. As I understand it, Congress has not appopriated money for the targeted areas. However, this money is going to be allocated for this purpose.

As has been pointed out previously, this amount this year is 5 percent and I understand that in 5 years it will go to 25 percent of the total money available. With the present economic conditions, I see no way for this to be done without adversely affecting the overall basic level of assistance for conservation work in much of the State. I hope that this committee will give serious consideration to making adjustments in this particular feature of the program.

The second feature that I do not agree with is that of providing Federal block grants to States. As you know, the State, and as you heard many times today, the State of Mississippi is in very bad economic condition. Our tax revenues, I believe, over the last period were down another $12.5 million. In view of this situation, I do not believe that the State will be willing and able to come up with its matching funds. This being true, it would mean the funds can be allocated to other States that can provide the necessary State funds and would result in reducing the total funds allocated in Mississippi. There appears to be widespread opinions that States can and do administer the use of funds in a more efficient manner. In this case, though, I don't believe this is true. We already have a very good delivery system through the ASC and SCS to assist in developing and carrying out soil and water conservation programs at the local district level. In keeping with the public response to this feature which was opposed by 85 percent, I recommend that this feature be reconsidered and funds provided through the present agencies and organizations.

There is one other feature about the program on which I will make a comment. This relates to the requirement that an applicant for a Farmers Home farmer-ownership loan or soil and water conservation loan to have or to request a conservation plan for the land on which the loan is to be used. I subscribed to the principle of this requirement. Certainly it would be wonderful if every farmer had his plan and was carrying it out, and if this could be carried out, it would certainly contribute to the conservation of our resources. The point that I want to make here, though, is we are having a decline in technical assistance at the same time that we would be accelerating the workload. We already have a greater workload than can be met. If this additional work is to be performed, it is essential that the Soil Conservation Service be provided additional funds for personnel services. Otherwise, this feature on the program should be reconsidered.

Obviously, I have not attempted to comment about all aspects of the RCA soil and water conservation program. I chose to limit my specific comments to those features that I felt like needed your attention the greatest. I would appreciate your considering these as the program development process proceeds.

Again, let me say that I really appreciate this opportunity to appear at this hearing. Thank you.

Senator **COCHRAN**. Thank you, Mr. Evans, Mr. Chairman, I think we have heard some very fine, well prepared and thoughtful statements for this panel of witnesses. And I want to express my genuine appreciation for the time devoted to developing the presentations that have been made. I think this is going to help us carry back to Washington a message of some very well-reasoned reactions to this national conservation program that deserve very careful consideration by our subcommittee and by the Appropriations Committee as well. I am particularly impressed with the uniformity of opinion about the level of funding and the concern about targeting if it means that we are not going to maintain a base level of support, of technical assistance, and matching programs to help get at some of these continuing problems. I think we need to recognize this as a genuine concern here is the South and make sure that it is cranked into the process of implementing this program. It has not been pointed out there today and I have been reluctant to mention it because I don't want Senator Jepsen to get upset with me, but in the jobs bill we have $115 million for the Soil Conservation Service of which approximately 10 percent has been allocated to Mississippi. I didn't have anything to do with that. But we did get a good share of that money here in our State to help provided jobs to people who are still out of work because of the continuing recession. I think this is an example of the realization that allocating funds to States and areas where you do have serious problems is something that's important. Of course, that $11 million can be used up pretty quickly. It is, however, an additional amount of money over and above the State's regular allocation.

I noticed both Mr. Morrow and Mr. Evans mentioned in looking over the past years how much money has gone into the Soil Conservation Service, and how much money of that has come to Mississippi. Nationally there has been a fairly level amount of funding, over $900 million a year. This year, the budget requests in our subcommittee is over $600 million. We are looking at an administration proposed cut in soil conservation of about $270 million for this next fiscal year. I don't know what other members of my Appropriations subcommittee are going to do or say or how they are going to vote when it comes time to write that bill, but I don't think our subcommittee is going to be sympathetic to that drastic reduction in funding. There was a request last year for a substantial cut in funding for the Soil Conservation Service, and we just didn't go along with it. We battled some of the other programs that are important, I know. But Soil Conservation Service funding was protected last year, and I hope it can be again this year. We are going to try every way we can to make sure the maximum amount of funding that can be made available to these programs is made available, and that our region and other regions which have important problems are allocated fair and reasonable shares of those dollars.

I don't know that I have any specific questions. I prepared a long list of questions, but you must have been looking over my shoulder when I prepared them because you have pretty well gone right down the list and answered them in your statements. So let me just say that I appreciate you being here and helping us with this hearing. I think you have done an excellent job.

Senator JEPSEN. If I may, I would just like to quickly move from my left to right of the panel, starting with Dorothy Butts, and ask the question, do you think that the Federal Government should require some sort of conservation practices in return for Federal assistance with farm programs? In other words, should soil conservation be mandatory or voluntary?

Mrs. BUTTS. I think it should be voluntary. "Mandatory" is still a dirty word to me.

Mr. BULLOCK. Voluntary.

Mr. LILLEY. Voluntary.

Mr. MORROW. Voluntary.

Mr. WHITEHEAD. I think there should be stronger restraints or penalities for those who do not follow good conservation practices. As I said earlier, I believe in the American free market system. But I think we have a serious problem. In the long run, a voluntary program will correct it, but in the long run we are all going to be dead. It's just not quick enough, and there has to be some sort of reward and penalty system that forces compliance.

Mr. EVANS. Voluntary.

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether they know about it, but Bill Armstrong has offered that sodbuster bill, or you may be a sponsor of it. It's a piece of legislation that has been the subject of hearings in Washington and would actually make a person ineligible for participating in a farm program if he puts into cultivation land that has been identified in a survey as land that should not be in cultivation, but should be in timber or pasture or some other use. There have been a couple of hearings. You may have additional hearings scheduled.

Senator JEPSEN. I have chaired those hearings, and we have a lot of investment in Colorado where people come in to buy up land that is absolutely arid to then become eligible for Federal moneys from farm programs to help them pay off for their investment in their land, and that's where they get the "sodbuster." They bust up the sod which should never have been and it washes away and it deteriorates and they never really had any intention of farming it or taking care of it. It's a matter of just getting under a Government program to help them buy the land. So you see, that was a specific thing. And so we didn't require something be mandatory. It comes back to they said they were going to take land and buy it, and it was not land that should be tilled, so they would not be eligible to receive any program moneys to do that particular thing. Do any of you have any other comments you would like to make?

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much. Our final panel includes out-of-State witnesses whom we are very happy to have with us today. Mr. James P. Martin, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee of the Louisiana State Legislature; Robert Odom, the commissioner of agriculture for the State of Louisiana; and Marion Sanders, chairman of the Alabama State Soil and Water Conservation Committee. We appreciate your patience in waiting to testify before the committee. As has already been indicated, Senator Jepsen, as chairman of this subcommittee, is having hearings all around the country involving States and surrounding States. Whenever we go into an area, he is inviting neighboring States to have representatives there because we are trying to look at problems around the Nation and to include as many States and their interests as possible in this effort to get a reaction to the national conservation program. Your presence here is very important, and we appreciate so much your being here today. Mr. Chairman, we will lead off with Mr. James P. Martin.

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES P. MARTIN, A LOUISIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE, AND CHAIRMAN, LOUISIANA HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Mr. MARTIN. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee, I am Jimmy Martin, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Louisiana State Legislature.[1] I also serve as chairman of the joint House-Senate Agriculture Committee in the State legislature. I, along with my colleague, Mr. Odom, have a deep-vested interest in the well-being of agriculture in the great State of Louisiana.

It is a pleasure for me to be here. We are in the middle of a session right now, so I understand your patience in listening to everyone that comes before you.

The protection of our resource base in Louisiana is essential not only to the State but to the Nation as well. Louisiana has some of the most varied and valuable water resources of any State in the Union.

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[1] See p. 373 for the prepared statement of Mr. Martin.

Our State topography ranges from heavy timber-producing areas in the rolling hills of the northern part of the State to rich alluvial flood plains of the major river traversing the State; to the large gulf coastal marsh areas in the southern part of the State.

These wide ranges of natural resources provide many opportunities for agriculture production; however, they also involve a complex management program.

I wish to discuss with you today one of these resource areas that is not served by the RCA program document; that is, our gulf coastal marsh areas. This area comprises about 3.2 million acres spanning from the west side of the State to the east boundary, covering the entire southern end of our State. About 20 percent of the coastal marshes are located in Louisiana, and around 40 percent of the Nation's wetlands are located in Louisiana.

The wetlands of Louisiana support a commercial and sports fishing and hunting industry valued in the millions of dollars annually. Shrimp and menhaden, esturine-dependent species comprising over 95 percent of commercial fishery yields in Louisiana, accounted for just less than $200 million at dockside in 1978, and if you take the value after processing, that amounts to over $3.25 billion. Sports fishing represented a value of $76 million in 1975, figures which in 1981 would approach in excess of $100 million.

The area produced over 22 percent of the total fisheries in the United States in 1981. This contributed about $900 million annually to Louisiana's revenue.

I think it is important to note that approximately 60 percent of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported.

Approximately $18 million annually are received from fur production.

Over 14,300 alligators were trapped in the 1980–81 season with a cash value of $1.7 million.

My purpose in singling out this resource area is its vast importance to the agricultural economy of the State and Nation.

The major problem is the rapid deterioration of the marsh areas through soil erosion.

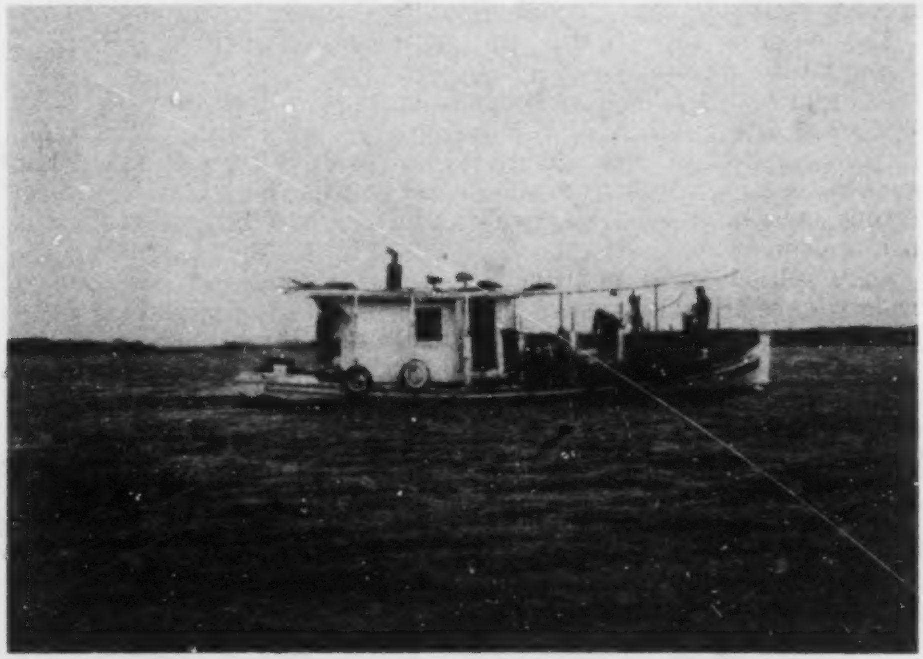
Approximately 39 square miles of marsh are lost annually. This loss manifests itself in the conversion to open water. The most alarming aspect of this change is, unlike crop erosion which has some redeeming value, once the marsh is gone there is no recovery. Simply, saltwater kills freshwater vegetation. When vegetation is lost, erosion occurs.

They tell me that pictures are worth a thousand words. And since we are the last presenters today, if you could give us a little time. I think I could save a lot of testimony, if you have no objection. If you would, bring that forward.

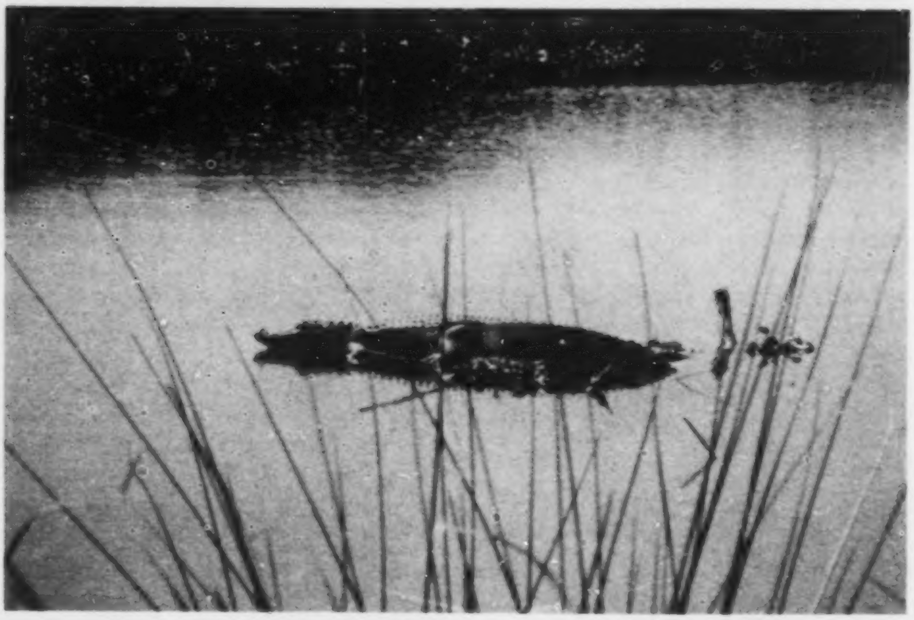
Senator COCHRAN. All right. (Mr. Martin and assistant activate slide projector.)

Mr. MARTIN. Slide 1: The State of Louisiana fisheries industry produces more tonnage of commercial fish than any other State in the Nation, in excess of 1.5 billion pounds. The estuaries of Louisiana are an important nursery area for shrimp which are produced at a current level of over 1 billion pounds annually.

Slide 2: The oyster industry in our State accounts for 40 to 50 percent of the total U.S. oyster production.



Slide 3: The American alligator, once an endangered species, is currently at population levels such that it is commercially harvested. Approximately 80 percent of the total U.S. production of alligators is harvested in Louisiana.



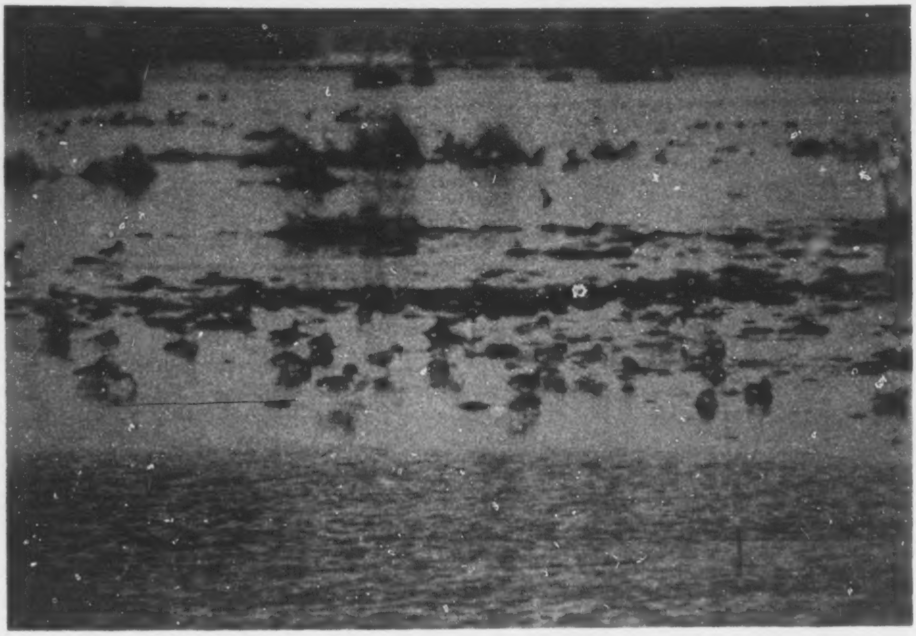
Slide 4: The coastal areas of our State lead not only the Nation but the North American continent in the production of fur.

Slide 5: The trapping industry in Louisiana accounts for almost $20 million annually.

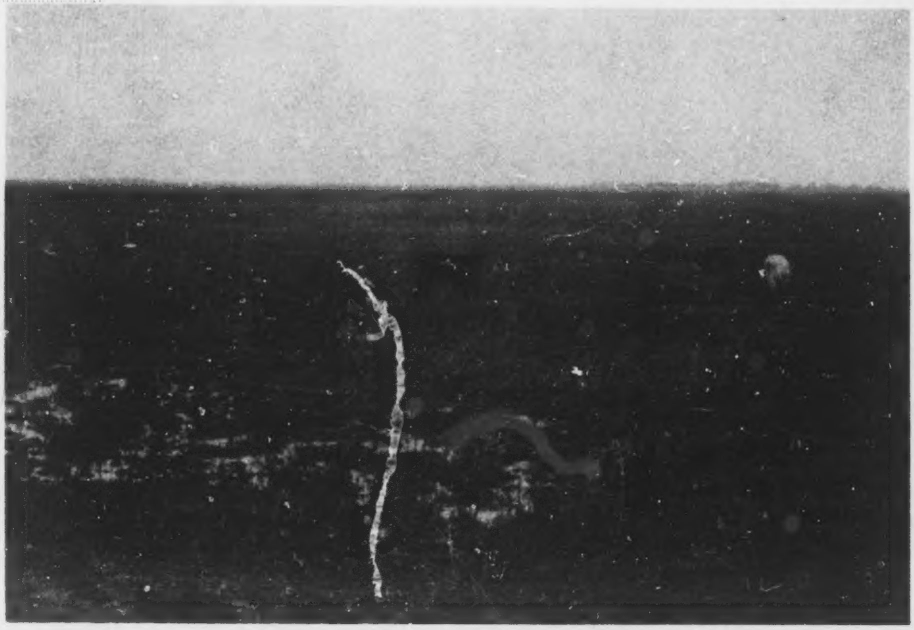
Slide 6: Louisiana has long been known for its major migratory waterfowl hunting.

Slide 7: The salt marshes and brackish marshes of our State are major wintering areas for over 400,000 geese on an annual basis.

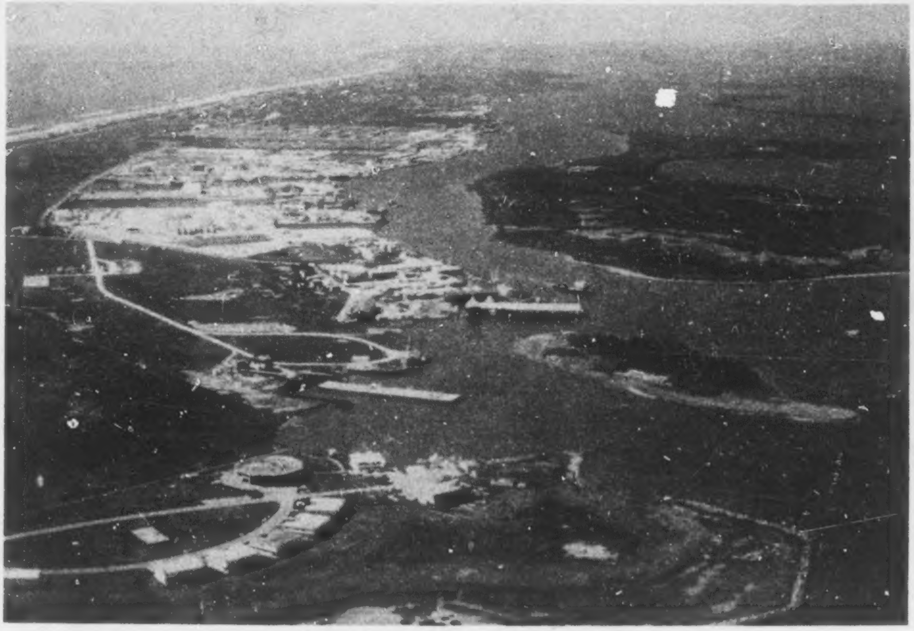
Slide 8: Our fresh and intermediate marshes are the wintering grounds for over 4.5 million ducks each year.



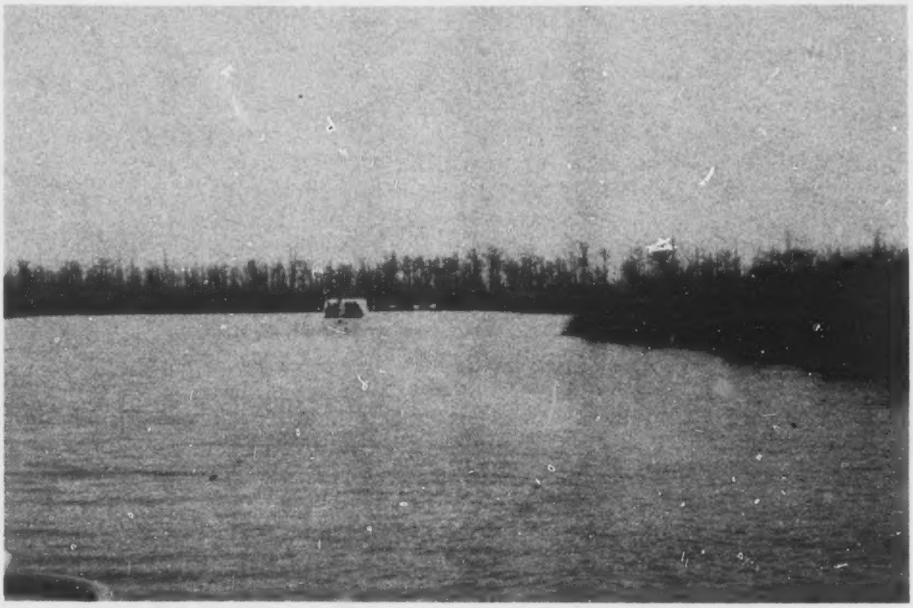
Slide 9: The livestock industry in the marsh country is of major significance. Approximately half of the area is currently grazed.



Slide 10: We also use our coastal area for recreation and industrial purposes.

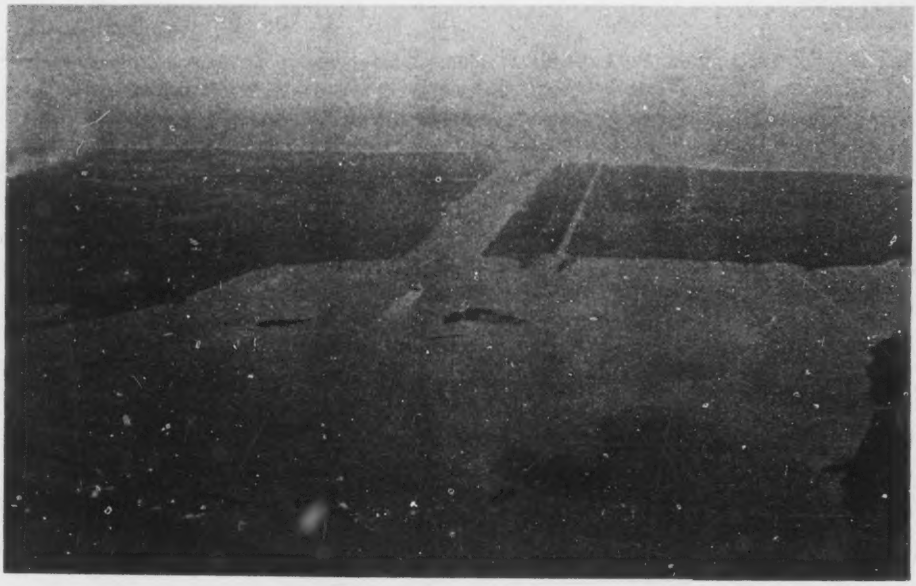


Slide 11: However, these uses are not always without some drawbacks. Navigation canals such as this one have led to the introduction of salt water into previously freshmarsh and swamp areas. Large areas such as the cypress swamp in the background have been killed by saltwater intrusion.



Slide 12: Our use of transportation corridors such as this road have led to the disruption of the natural flow of water. In some cases drowning portions of the marsh and in other areas accelerating saltwater intrusion.

Slide 13: Improved navigation outlets on many of our natural tributaries have led to saltwater intrusion.



Slide 14: Our quest for flood-free homesites has led us to levee off many areas, including the major levee projects on the mighty Mississippi River. These levee systems have also affected the natural water regime of our coastal area and have disrupted the sediment recharge needed to replenish our marshes.

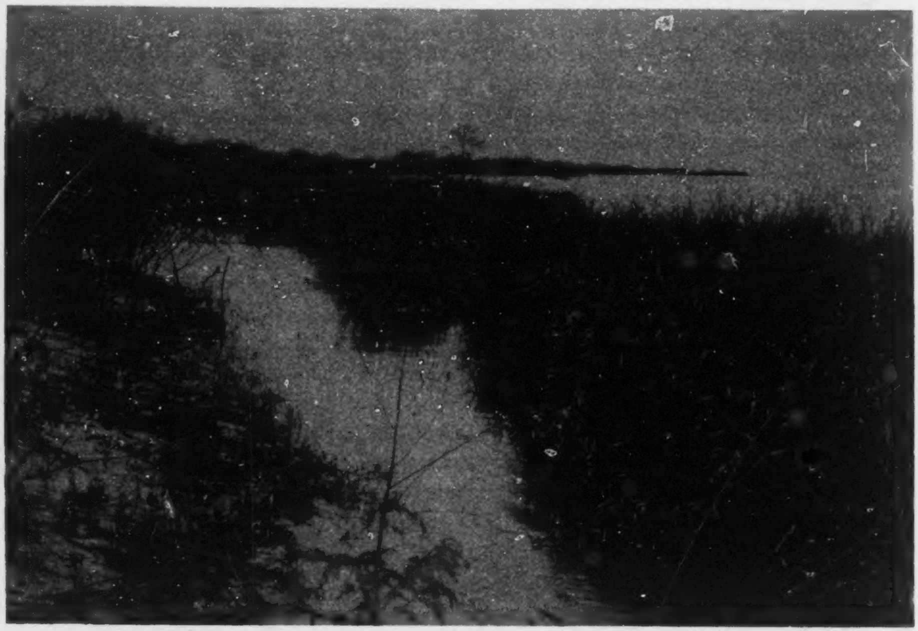
Slide 15: Many areas of Louisiana's marsh are accessible only by canals. Canals are built for transportation, as well as mineral exploration. These canals also have the potential for bringing saltwater into previously freshmarsh areas. The vegetation in these areas cannot withstand the salinity and the vegetation soon dies out, usually to be replaced by open water.

Slide 16: Man is not the only problem in the loss of much of our coastal area. Natural streams such as this one change their course as they have been doing over billions of years altering water and sediment flow in the marsh.

Slide 17: But the end result, both natural and man-made, is approximately 40 square miles of Louisiana lost to open water on an annual basis.

Slide 18: Things can be done to improve this situation. Shoreline planting, such as this on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain using adapted plants which have salt tolerance—

Slide 19: —can be used to provide vegetation barriers to still wave action.



Slide 20: Our barrier islands are unique geological forms as well as a major protector of our marsh. They help to still the Gulf of Mexico's tides and protect the inland marshes.

Slide 21: Stabilization of the dunes on the islands is necessary to maintain the barriers.

Slide 22: They can be successfully vegetated as shown here. In March 1981, a group of local, State, and Federal agencies joined together to look at problems on the Louisiana coastline.

Slide 23: Included in this group were vegetative specialists, taking a strong look at what plants were adaptable and what problems could be solved with plants.

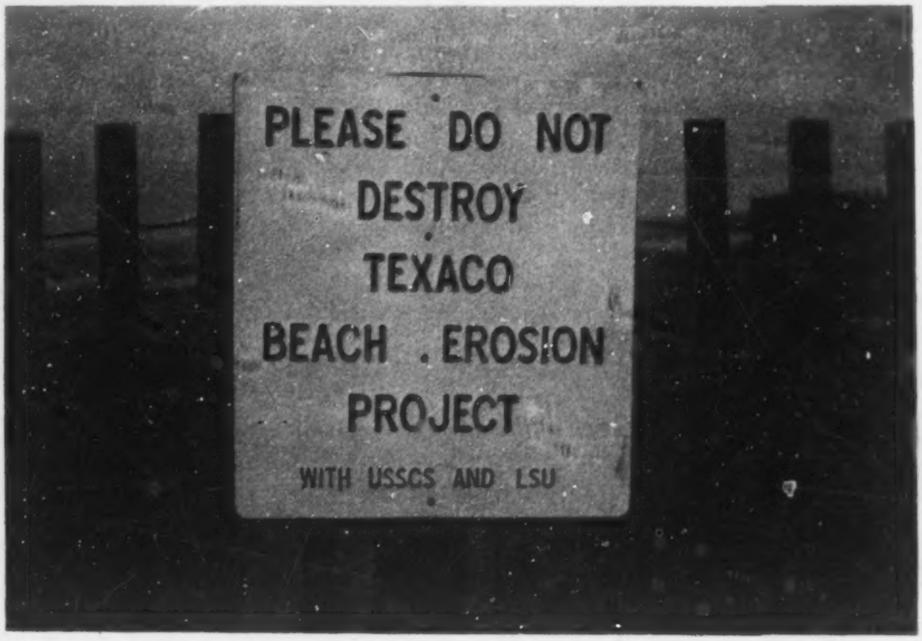
Slide 24: Soil scientists, looking at the soil resources and what the major soil related problems were.

Slide 25: Structures designed to keep saltwater out of the marshes.

Slide 26: The group looked at the livestock industry and what was needed by this group of resource managers.

Slide 27: On the barrier islands the group took special note of some of the erosion problems involved, as this is a major resource fast diminishing. As a result of this tour,

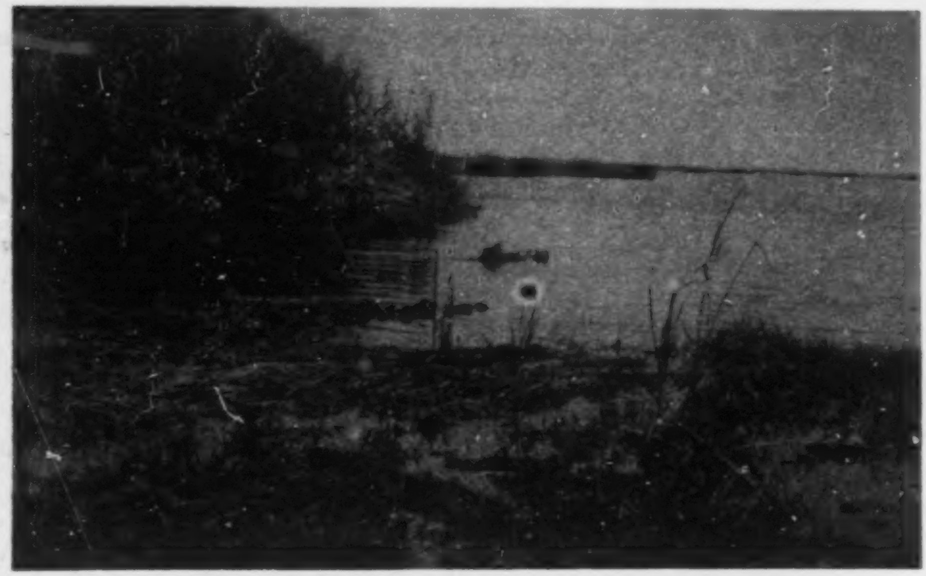
Slide 28: A beach erosion project was instituted and during the summer of 1981,



Slide 29: Sand fences were installed and vegetative materials were established in this area.

Slide 30: By October 1981, dune stabilization and dune building was already underway.

Slide 31: Our organic marshes have problems of their own. This area was at one time a freshmarsh. Saltwater intrusion via navigation canal has led to the loss of the plant community in this area. Salt-tolerant plants have been introduced into this area to try to reclaim the area to vegetation.

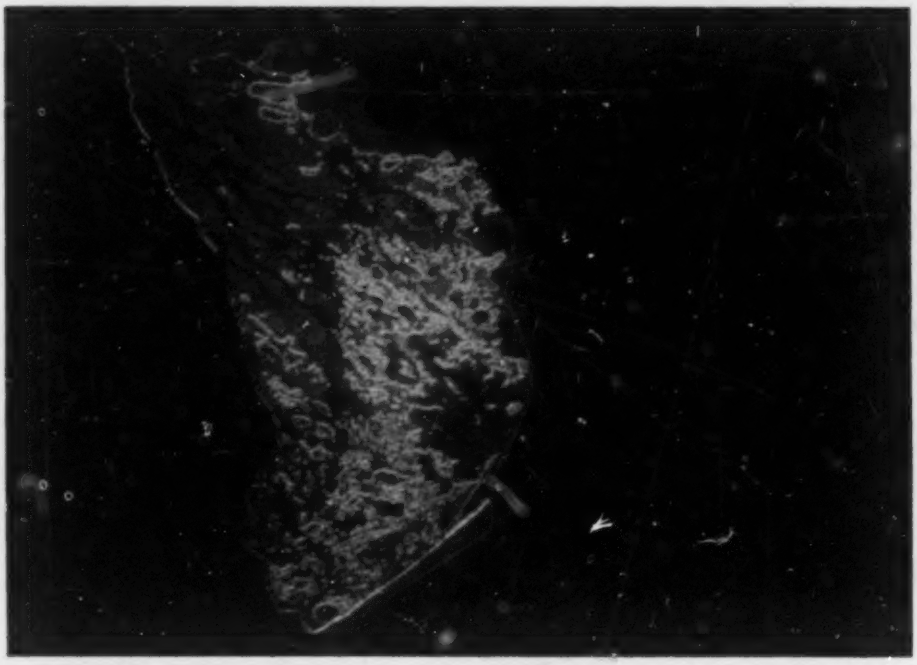


Slide 32: With current knowledge these introductions of plant materials must be done manually with vegetative material. A need exists to find ways to seed these areas, either mechanically or by air.

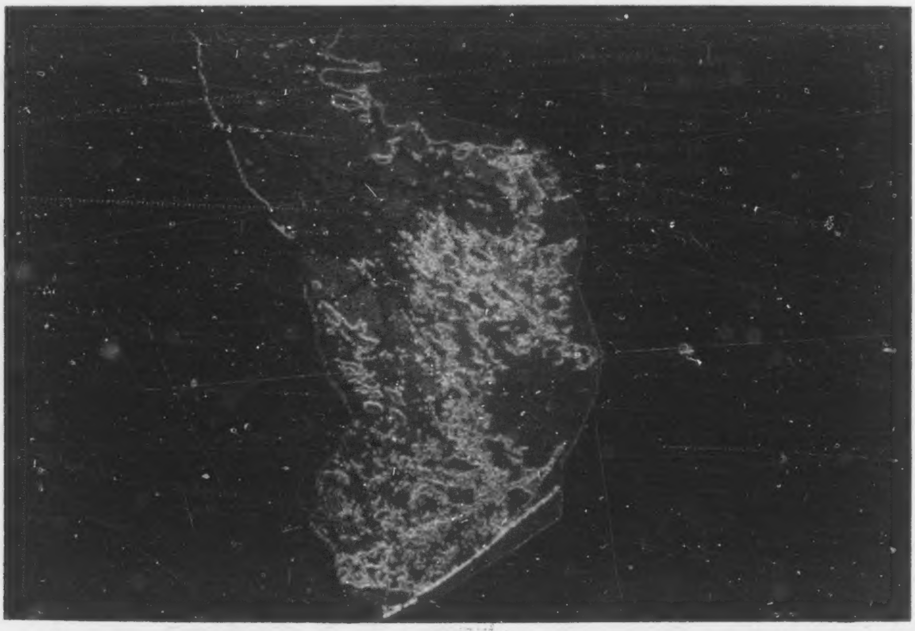
Slide 33: In the southwest part of our State, Calcasieu Lake is an example of a major shoreline erosion problem. This lakeshore has been established to be eroding at a rate of 10 to 12 feet annually.

I call your special attention to the last three slides. These illustrate move vividly the dramatic loss of marsh land occuring.

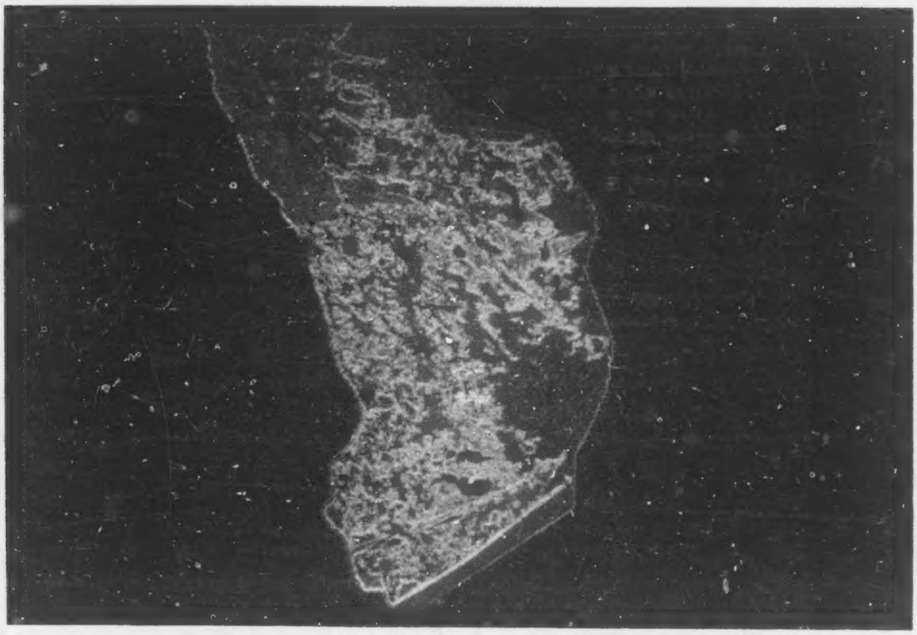
Slide 34: This is an aerial picture of Lafourche Parish in 1945, 320 square miles. Please note the large amount of shaded portion representing marsh areas.



Slide 35: Now let's look at the same area 10 years later. Some loss, but not too bad.



Slide 36: Now let's look at the same area 25 years later. You can see the large increase in shaded area which represents loss of marsh.



I hope this group of slides shows you that coastal erosion problems in Louisiana are not only Louisiana's problems but those of the Nation as a whole. We have not been sitting idly by while this resource has been deteriorating. In 1978 the State began operation of its coastal resource management program. This program operates in concert with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' section 404 permit program for dredge and fill activities. In 1981, the Louisiana Legislature established a $35 million coastal environmental protection trust fund to be used for projects to protect and improve the coastal areas. Since the 1940's, the Soil Conservation Service and local soil and water conservation districts have provided technical assistance to marsh landowners to plan and implement conservation programs on their land. Local units of government are currently developing coastal management plans to act as guides for the future development and protection of our coastal marshes. Interagency groups as well as groups of landowners working together are attempting to find solutions to the problems of our area. Foremost is a need for technical assistance in developing and implementing multiresource management plans.

You may be asking what this has to do with the RCA plan. Currently the greatest need in the marsh parishes is to accelerate the technical assistance available through the Soil Conservation Service and the local soil and water conservation districts to reduce soil erosion in this area. The RCA program document does not include any provisions for targeting funds to this resource problem. Yet erosion is more devastating in this area than on much of the cropland throughout the Nation.

Mr. Chairman, the State of Louisiana has made a deep commitment to preserve this area. I come before you today asking for your support to provide Federal assistance that will compliment the current commitment of the State. The vegetative and soil expertise contained within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, should be made available for more accelerated technical assistance to address these urgent needs.

Thank you very much.

Senator JEPSEN. I have just one quick question while it's fresh. Soil erosion, all through your remarks, I gathered was due to salt water killing vegetation which holds the land. Then salt water was coming in there because of manmade waterways and canals. Where do the soil conservation practices come into play?

Mr. MARTIN. During mineral exploration in which they drill, and you know we have much oil and gas production in our coastal areas, they bring in—they dredge a canal to a specific site. At that site they have a barge that comes in that the rig is mounted on and everything, and they drill for oil and gas in these areas. In setting up a distribution system and everything to collect the oil by barge and bring it back and everything, they have created a lot of problems. A lot of this could be solved with the gate structures to isolate these areas. We have more control over the saltwater and try to reduce its infiltration and then our freshwater marshes will have a better opportunity of surviving. One thing I didn't touch on—I hate to take up so much time. If we can divert some of the freshwater to flush out the marshes when we have floods, then we can control that and the life expectancy of the marshes would be enhanced greatly.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you. This has been very interesting and provocative. We appreciate that. Our next witness is Robert Odom, commissioner of agriculture of the State of Louisiana.

STATEMENT OF HON. BOB ODOM, COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE, STATE OF LOUISIANA

Mr. ODOM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee. I am Bob Odom, comissioner of agriculture for the State of Louisiana. On behalf of the State of Louisiana and its Governor, Dave Treen, I wish to express my appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this committee for the opportunity of appearing before you to explain the concerns and needs of Louisiana on the impact of the program policies contained in the recent Soil and Water Resources Conversation Act program document developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Senator Jepsen, I compliment you on the intense interest and concern that you have demonstrated for soil and water conservation by scheduling these hearings.

You are to be commended for providing these opportunities for States to work with Congress in developing the best possible program at the Federal level that will compliment State efforts in preserving our most valuable soil and water resources. I also wish to compliment Secretary of Agriculture John Block on the extensive analysis and work performed by his Department in preparation of this document. It is evident that much work has been done and much information developed in the course of producing this material.

I will direct my remarks to two major areas of concern that can adversely affect Federal-State programs of soil and water conservation in Louisiana. My specific concerns are: One, the rigid priorities that do not allow any flexibility to address unique State resources needs and concerns, and the targeting of soil and water conservation funds.

Louisiana has 12.5 million acres of prime farmland. Eight and a half million acres are in cropland and pasture. Income from agriculture and agriculture-related industries exceeded $164 billion in 1981. The RCA program document establishes reduction of soil erosion on cropland as the number one priority. The reduction of flood damages and water conservation are established as coequal second priority. I certainly agree that erosion is a nationwide problem. It must be the concern of all of our citizens and should be the top priority from a nationwide standpoint if the United States is to maintain its present position as the top agricultural producer in the world. However, I think that beyond the erosion problem the concerns become quite different on a regional and statewide basis.

I readily admit that in the Midwest or the rolling hill areas of the South upsteam flood control is a high priority item and in the West water conservation is a must in order to sustain agricultural production.

In Louisiana drainage is the most important water management need on many of our farmland areas. It has one of the most significant impacts on crop yields and subsequent effects on the agricultural economy of the State. It is a vital part of the farm management system necessary to maintain the resource base and maximize production. Most of our production is on the flat alluvial soils of the major rivers that traverse this State. The majority of our hill lands were converted to pine forest in the 1930's and 1940's. Effective soil conservation practies such as agronomic measures are dependent upon effective water management systems.

It is unfortunate that "drainage" became a "bad word" during the late sixties and early seventies when the environmental movement made it synonymous with draining wetlands and bottomland hardwoods. We need to provide drainage for our cropland that is now in production, not our valuable wetlands.

In past years the alluvial valley which comprised about one-third of the land areas in the State, was subject to overflow from major rivers. About 40 percent of the United States drains through Louisiana by way of the Mississippi River. In fact, we are currently contending with some unusual high water stages on the Mississippi River and other major rivers in the State at this time.

It has become necessary to open the Bonnet Carre Spillway on the Mississippi River near New Orleans to reduce the flow passing New Orleans. This spillway has been opened only seven times since its construction in 1931. It contains 350 gates and is discharging approximately 200,000 cubic feet per second.

The Corps of Engineers, beginning with the Flood Control Act of 1917, provided major flood prevention work to protect more frequent floods. The benefits of these major works of improvement have far exceeded the cost. Even though the floods were controlled from the major rivers, it left us with internal flooding and drainage problems and many landowners were forced to sacrifice large acreages of prime farmland for flood protection measures. Many of the small stream systems were interrupted by the levee floodway system and water control facilities.

These areas now need a complex system of channels that are well planned and engineered to provide the drainage and internal flood protection to sustain a profitable agriculture. A vast system of major channel outlets is needed so that farmers can install the needed nonfarm drainage. The Louisiana Legislature has long recognized the need for flood control and drainage and has annually appropriated funds for the Louisiana Office of Public Works to provide such facilities. It is important that drainage be given a high priority in Louisiana and other high agriculture producing States. Federal assistance is needed to provide major outlets. Our farmers in the last 3 years are in one of the worst cost/price squeezes in history. Without adequate drainage and protection from flooding, yields are lower and production costs increase. A well-drained field in most recent years means the difference between a profit and a loss. It has a very positive short-term economic effect as well as being a part of the long-term conservation system.

Mr. Chairman, the wisdom of Congress regarding water resources has been expressed in the major flood control legislation enacted during the early thirties and the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act signed into law in the early fifties. These two major pieces of legislation have provided the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Soil Conservation Service with the necessary authority to join with States in planning and implementing important water management systems. The RCA plan specifically limits the Secretary of Agriculture from carrying out the full intent of Congress expressed in Public Law 566. This limitation occurred by redirecting USDA policy and programs to the priorities shown in the RCA program document. Cropland damage is not one of the priority items.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly recommend that the RCA document retain soil erosion reduction as the Nation's No. 1 priority. States should be allowed to establish other priorities relative to their individual unique resource problems and within the purview of existing enabling legislation. This would allow the State of Louisiana to continue its strong State-Federal programs of water-resource management.

Briefly, I would like to express my concern about the targeting of resource conservation funds. The continuation of a strong soil and water conservation program in Louisiana is vital to the agricultural economy of this State. As a member of the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and as commissioner of agriculture and a farmer from the State of Louisiana, I am deeply concerned that Federal funding for soil and water conservation activities be maintained at a level to provide a sound, basic program through the State. The RCA document shows eventual reduction of up to 25 percent of the Federal funds to those items shown in the priority listing. This can cause a serious imbalance in the program and the delivery system of soil and water conservation throughout the State. I agree with the concept of targeting. Targeting is basically a good management of funds to provide funds in the most needed areas. However, in areas where strong emphasis is needed to carry out a more urgent program of soil and water conservation, additional funds should be made available for these areas in order to strengthen this program rather than to take the now reduced funding made available and redirect these toward those areas leaving voids in our total program.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I would strongly urge this committee to consider maintaining a strong basic funding for soil and water conservation programs throughout the Nation and where emphasis is needed, target additional funds into areas of special concern.

As late as 2 weeks ago in Louisiana due to an excessive amount of rainfall, large numbers of our acres of cotton had to be replanted where additional drainage could possibly have saved this problem.

Again, I would like to express my appreciation to the committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am available to answer questions. Thank you.

Senator **Cochran**. Thank you very much, Mr. Odom. Marion Sanders, chairman of the Alabama State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.[1]

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[1] See p. 376 for the prepared statement of Mr. Sanders.

STATEMENT OF MARION SANDERS, CHAIRMAN, ALABAMA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Chairman and Senator Cochran, it is a pleasure for me to appear before you to provide Alabama's views on USDA's national soil and water conservation program. I am Marion Sanders, a farmer from Coffee County, Ala. I am also a conservation district supervisor and chairman of the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee. I appear before you as a concerned conservationist and head of the agency charged under law to provide leadership in carrying out soil and water conservation programs in Alabama.

This committee and each of the 67 soil and water conservation districts in Alabama actively participated in the development of this national program. We held public meetings and commented on draft documents from the very inception of the process. Over 1,450 Alabamians commented on the draft program in January of 1982.

We recommended several changes in the program and are pleased that they were accepted by the Secretary. We generally support most features of the program. We recognize in Alabama that serious soil erosion on the cropland is our most serious conservation problem, and we strongly support the concept of targeting as an efficient way of maximizing the limited-resource dollars we have to protect our land base. Our State Soil and Water Conservation Committee and the State Association of Conservation Districts have gone on record strongly endorsing targeting. We do endorse this heartily in Alabama. We have different areas in the State. In fact, in the area I live, in the southeastern part of the State, the coastal plains where erosion is a real problem and this targeting can really be of great benefit to us. We strongly oppose taking money away from the Soil Conservation Service and putting into these targeted areas. We want to keep the money that we have, and we need additional money for soil conservation. This is our view. Why, if protection of our soil resources is essential to our long-term survival, is less than two-tenths of 1 percent of our Federal budget allocated to this purpose? Comparing budgets, we find that $1,555 goes for defense for each conservation dollar; $1,555 for defense for each $1 spent for conservation of our soil. Yet, without our massive agricultural machine, we would have national security problems.

How can soil and water conservation be a major issue and receive such a low level of funding? The public opinion survey carried out by pollster Lou Harris under the RCA process revealed that the public is willing to give an appropriate share of its tax dollars to pay a part of the cost to protect our land base on which our children depend for food, clothing, and shelter. In my opinion, the farmer is paying more than his share of the conservation cost. Mr. Chairman, it is my opinion that an in-depth study by the Department of Agriculture, academia, and Congress is needed to determine the portion of soil and water conservation costs that should be paid by society versus that paid by the farmer. No such in-depth study has ever been carried out. As has been pointed out by several here this morning in this hearing, we are only here for a short time on this land. I may own this land for 20 years, but this land passes on. And this land we must save, this soil we must save for future generations.

I would like to address the RCA process. I believe the RCA process has been very effective in accomplishing several things. The Nation was provided with sound scientific information indicating for the first time that our resource base is deteriorating. It brought into focus the fact that we don't know the relationship of erosion on yields, a very key point if we are to sell conservation on factors other than stewardship and persuasion. Sometimes, learning what we don't know is very important. For the first time, we are beginning to coordinate agency efforts to address in priority order our soil and water conservation problems. As an example, in Alabama technical assistance from Soil Conservation Service and cost sharing from Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service—ASCS—are now being targeted to severely eroding areas in a coordinated fashion. I do not believe this would have occurred without the RCA process. Data obtained during the process were used in determining the loss of prime agricultural lands.

The Governor of Alabama recently asked our soil and water conservation committee to develop a long-range program for the State of Alabama. We are planning to carry this out in a scientific manner using the latest data and techniques available to determine the alternative uses of our land and water resources and the impact of these alternative uses on the State's economy.

We in Alabama still believe in the voluntary approach to soil and water conservation. An individual has a right to use his land as he sees fit as long as he does not abuse it and destroy its use for future generations. I have served with the NACD as a councilman from Alabama, and I have always been opposed to the cross-compliance in a strict sense of the word. But I am beginning to come to the point that I realize that we are going to have to have a little more than the voluntary approach. I think it will be a gradual thing. But we must encourage a little more through the farm agencies and Farmers Home Administration and other assistance that the farmer may get, that he is going to have to take care of the soil. It's just something that's coming. I have always been strongly in favor of a strictly voluntary approach. But I am beginning to see that we have to protect our soil and we are going to have to go a little different route. It will be a long time in coming, in my opinion.

Many of the problems of soil erosion occur on these rented lands, oftentimes marginal lands, because the renter does not have the incentive to apply conservation. In the black belt area of Alabama which is highly erosive prairie soils, grass replaced cotton in the forties and fifties. In the early seventies, farmers from other States came into Alabama and rented this land for soybean production and mined it and left it. And the yields on some lands went from 30 to 40 bushels an acre in the beginning to the present yields on those lands of 15 to 20 bushels per acre. Much of this land today is still in an eroding condition. It is eroding while the landowners and farmers play musical chairs. The landowner is looking for another year's rent, and the farmer is hoping for one more good crop. Unfortunately, neither party has an incentive to plant grass, build fences, and return to cattle farming. Now, the farmers were assisted to apply this grass. And now it's been taken out and now it needs to be put back in grass and will have to be in order to be stabilized.

I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that tax dollars assisted in establishing these lands to grass, and it will again take tax dollars to bring them back into a nondeteriorating condition. How long can this Nation condone such action? I know the issue of land use is very sensitive, but it must be addressed.

We in Alabama support the provision of matching grants to State soil and water conservation agencies, and are preparing to receive these funds when they are appropriated. State and local governments throughout the Nation are increasing their financial support to soil conservation districts, even though finances are in short supply. This indicates an awareness and concern by these elected officials. We are definitely in favor of grants coming through existing agencies and not as was done in the study, I believe, in the poll, as was recommended.

Mr. Chairman, I find the erosion problem in the South somewhat cyclic. We older farmers saw how erosion could destroy our land. Many of our younger farmers missed the dust bowl and the cotton era of the South with its devastating impacts. These young farmers were taught that straight row farming is the most efficient and that bigger is better. Many are now learning the hard way that attention must be given to the care of their land. How long can we as a Nation with half our topsoil already gone continue this cycle of what I call erosion learning? Shouldn't soil conservation be stressed more in our education systems which are tax supported?

We as a Nation have some tough decisions to make concerning the use of our land. In my opinion, the 3,000 soil and water conservation districts throughout this country stand ready to help make these most important decisions.

I appreciate your allowing me to present this testimony. We welcome you, Mr. Cochran, to Alabama and would be pleased to have you, Mr. Jepsen, revisit our State. Thank you very much.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you. I really appreciate you adding to this hearing as you have. I know we have run a little late, and Senator Jepsen has a plane to catch and he's going to be juggling schedules here if we're not too careful. I'm not going to take up any extra time except to say thank you very much for being here and helping us understand the problems of your State and helping make our record complete for this hearing. You have added greatly to it, thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. I also wish to extend my appreciation and thanks for your testimony. I learned a new dimension of soil conservation today from Louisiana that I hadn't considered or thought of before. And I appreciate your comments and your pictures. How do you feel about mandatory versus voluntary soil conservation practices within the Government program, Mr. Odom?

Mr. ODOM. I think an incentive program would be better than a mandatory program. There are some incentive programs.

Mr. MARTIN. I feel the same way. If soybeans were selling for $15 a bushel I might go for a mandatory program. But with the economy like it is, I think it would cripple those who couldn't afford to participate in the program.

Mr. **Sanders**. I think I would favor gradually bringing in a program where—I wouldn't call it—I don't necessarily call it a mandatory program where you say that you can't get money from Farmers Home Administration unless you have a conservative program or we can't give you technical assistance through the Soil Conservation Service—I don't call that a mandatory program. I call that just encouraging the farmer and educating him.

Senator **Jepsen**. Kind of a forced education?

Mr. **Sanders**. Yes, sir. I am in favor of such a program, sir.

Mr. **Odom**. One thing that you surely want to watch in Congress is that right now you can have some incentives on tax-exempt dollars for soil conservation purposes. That's something that we look very strongly at in Louisiana.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you want to put that mike by you? I want everyone to hear you.

Mr. **Odom**. Right now we can use tax-exempt dollars in a lending type of program on a soil conservation program, and it's something that we look with favor on. As a matter of fact, our Louisiana Legislature just authorized the financial authority to do this in Louisiana. This is the type of incentive that we are talking about. We surely don't want to lose that type of incentives. And as I understand, there has been bills in Congress to do away with some of the tax-exempt dollars as far as agriculture is concerned. But this will be a very important part of an incentive program—making available the tax-exempt dollars that will qualify as part of a crop reduction loan.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you gentlemen for coming over. And at this time, I will ask is there anyone else in attendance today that desires to be be heard? We will gladly accept your testimony and ask that you try to contain it to the time periods that we have. We would ask that you come forward at this time and identify yourself.

STATEMENT OF DALE WALLACE, VICKSBURG, MISS.

Mr. **Wallace**. My name is Dale Wallace, I am from Warren County, Vicksburg, Miss. I am continuing to operate our second-generation farm. I am also here as a representative of the Sierra Club. The way I found out about this hearing, as a matter of fact, was that the person who was going to be here in attendance was unable to come, so I am very glad that I have come. I have learned much from this session. It is good to see you folks here fielding some of our views. I trust that the gravity of the matter is appreciated by all of us.

One thing I have heard you, Senator, ask several times is a repeated question on mandatory requirements. It occurs to me that—I mean I realize the word isn't very palatable to many of us, the word "mandatory," but it occurs to me that very few things are free. And if my tax money and probably most of our tax moneys is going out and coming back to me as a farmer or somebody else as a farmer, I don't think it's unrealistic to expect that farmer to meet certain requirements to help preserve that farm, for instance. I realize that the ASCS in the past has asked us to do certain things, to report acreage in certain crops, et cetera, and if we didn't do that they didn't seem like they were necessarily going to help us on the price of lime or whatever. So that's kind of my view on the mandatory. It depends on how mandatory it is. You know, if it's whip or somebody is standing over you guarding—no. But if we are getting tax money for something, I don't see why they can't make some accommodations there.

And Senator Cochran was asking earlier about the ASCS's emphasis on erosion control, the different practices they offer. We have taken advantage of the—utilized some of the different practices over the years on our place. It is my opinion from what little bit that I am currently aware of as far as their specific erosion control practices, that there is not a great deal—this is my opinion—but there is not a great deal of emphasis on erosion control practices by the ASCS. I know they do have some. But I don't think there is a lot of emphasis being put on that. And I think most of us here would agree that it probably should be a lot of emphasis put on that particular category of practices. I even heard an ASCS manager earlier saying one of the things was if you set aside and left an area fallow, it was required to cut the weeds or whatever off, you know, to keep it from growing up in sprouts. Well, heck, that's not inconsistent with controlling erosion. You know, if the farmer's going to control erosion, he can let the sprouts grow, it's going to hold it. When he gets ready to farm it, he can plow that stuff under unless he's using a mule or something and then he might have problems.

I would like to see personally more erosion control practices emphasized by the ASCS. Now the Soil Conservation Service—I have recently been in contact with the soil conservation man in our area and he has been very helpful. He is, however, with the unusual amount of rainfall that we've had here in the last year and a half, stressed to meet the needs of all the requests. And the requests, I would assume, are a fairly small percentage of the people that really go to the man. I went there when we were in need, we were about to lose approximately a 20-acre lake that's been there for 35 years and it's a very good source of good, the source of our water. It's certainly doing a big part to control runoff. But in fact, it appears that because of his lack of manpower at the moment, he is likely not to be able to get us specific information like culvert size that we need to get construction work done to save it, and it's getting close. So yes, these people seem to be really helpful. Many times, especially with this unusual weather we've had, though barely adequate for even the people that are asking for their assistance. And I might add, as I understand it, the county that we live in is not one that is likely to be targeted in the near future for additional assistance.

I have jotted down stuff here. To spin off on some of the things about which you have heard a lot—I, too, am concerned about divergence of soil conservation funds eventually to high loss areas. And feel that Mr. Davidson's point was well taken earlier that these areas are now losing more subsoil than topsoil. So we should be aware that assistance needs to remain in place to help keep topsoil where it still exists even though those areas might not be classified as high loss. Of course, it's apparent that these high loss also that will likely be targeted need—need assistance to retain their subsoil even though they have lost most of their topsoil, their subsoil or their nearly sterile soil. That is, after all, the first step toward reaccumulation of a healthy soil. It will do us little good to cry over spilled milk. But we are going to be thought of as very foolish if we don't stop pouring it out. And that's what we are doing with our soil. Hopefully, our future decisions will reflect wisdom and not shortsightedness and greed. That's a basic countryperson's presentation.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you very much. You, sir, would you identify yourself?

STATEMENT OF SIDNEY BRANCH, CHAIRMAN, SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Mr. **Branch**. I am Sidney Branch from Montogomery County, dead center in the red area up there in that most critical part of the State as far as our soil loss and our conservation program is concerned.

In addition to being a third-generation farmer there, I am chairman of the soil conservation district commissioners, a member of the State soil conservation commission, and vice president of our State association of conservation districts.

And I would like to confine my remarks to three areas that I would like to comment on that I do not feel have been adequately touched. I do not have a written statement at this time, but I will follow up with one to you at a later date. One is that I do not believe that a lot of people in Washington and even within our State realize how much State and local support is already being given to soil conservation measures. I would like to point out that most of the support comes from the local district and other agencies and not necessarily directly from the State. But my estimate is that we have at least as much support from local and State agencies in the way of people and service as the Soil Conservation Service is providing. You may not believe that there is that much there. But at least 50 percent of the districts in the State of Mississippi are providing district employees, and some of them as many as five technically qualified employees that work right alongside of the Soil Conservation Service. You can't tell one from the other. They are supervised by soil conservationists. And unless you are told who pays the salary, you wouldn't know the difference. Our waterways, the Tombigbee Waterway, the Pat Harrison Waterway, the Pearl River Basin District provide people and services. There is a great amount provided through our local districts by way of volunteer personnel. So we are providing a tremendous amount.

One thing that I do not believe is addressed nearly as much as it should be in the RCA document is the watershed approach toward our problems. You cannot divide and separate soil erosion from water management and the other things that we have to do. I have seen the greatest amount of soil erosion occur in the last 2 weeks that I have seen in my lifetime—14 inches of rain in 1 week in three showers which washed away completely land of good, fertile bottomlands that had been prepared. And if we had had in place a Public Law 566 project in those particular watersheds, we would have cut that soil loss tremendously. I have seen an entire foot of topsoil leave in the last 2 weeks from prime cropland. This is soil erosion. But water management would have helped solve it. The watershed approach—because we can talk all day about what individual practices and individual farmers can do on his land, but unless we can get a watershed approach we will never be able to reach a lot of these.

Another item that you have asked, Senator Jepsen, several times is what about this cross compliance, mandatory controls and so on. Those are dirty words. But let's look at it in another light, and it's been mentioned, incentives. Let's make it incentives to do the right thing. We have had too many times one farm program conflict with conservation. And Senator Cochran, to me, the people that have benefitted the most from the PIK program, a lot of them in my particular county have been the ones that are the worst conservationists. By that, I mean they are farming the row crops in places they should not be. Now my county, my district has a completed soil survey. There are not many people in the county that can read it. Most of them have it in their farm plan, most of our farmers have a farm plan, a good one. But unless they know what they have got and the ASCS office knows what they have got and can read that and look at their land capability map and can interpret these things—we have got people that are putting cotton on class III lands. To me, Senator Cochran, that is a crime. Those same people are collecting a heck of a lot of money under the PIK program in farming places they should not be farming. So let's put it this way: use your land according to its capabilities. If you exceed the capability of that particular piece of soil, particular land, then you do not qualify for incentive programs. And I think this kind of approach would do. Now certainly some of that class III, class II, and class I land with certain types of programs can be farmed. But a lot of it not under the way it's being done.

Now the sodbuster bill, Senator Jepsen, I am very familiar with it, and agree with its concept. And I think it's a selling job that we've got to do, and we've got to sell ourselves. And I believe from the comments that you are hearing, that we are moving in that direction, and we have got to. We have got to make our farm programs complement each other and not give a person an incentive to farm the programs to the detriment of his land.

I appreciate the opportunity to say these few words, and I will have some written comments at a later time.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you for your comments and your suggestions and your information. This has been a hearing today where we emphasized and we opened up that we wanted to hear what you think, what you know, what you feel. We are asking you first about your needs and for suggestions. And then we will return to Washington and share what we have learned here as we review and examine the RCA between now and the early fall.

From all these discussions and all these hearings we hope to reach a balance that will serve as a guide to Congress in directing the administration as to what you people want. That's why we are taking these hearings to the field.

I again express to my very distinguished colleague, Senator Cochran, my heartfelt thanks for the invitation to come and start off our nationwide series of hearings here in your great State of Mississippi. The hospitality and graciousness of you and your staff have been most helpful and made this very pleasant. I thank you very much.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We really appreciate your bringing the subcommittee here. I think the hearing has been very successful and will be very helpful. I know that it's a long way from Mississippi to Iowa, and you could be up there doing things that would probably help you more directly than being here in Mississippi. We really do appreciate your being here and the way you have handled these hearings.

Also, Mr. Chairman, I would like to publicly thank Jim Newman who is on my staff who helped set up the hearing and coordinate some of the activities, Cary Laird on my staff who also did a superb job in helping with the arrangements, and David Graves who has been here throughout the hearing, my special assistant for agriculture matters. I appreciate the contribution that all of you have made to this hearing. Also I want to thank the able staff that works for our Committee on Agriculture in Washington and your subcommittee, they have all done a superb job, and we appreciate their help very much.

Senator JEPSEN. I want to extend my appreciation to Karla Perri and Mike Nervda on my staff for the great work they have done on this, and also to Mary Ferebee from Senator Helms' staff for taking time out of her busy schedule to come down and be with us, and all the assistants.

This meeting is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, the subcommittee adjourned, to reconvene Wednesday, June 1, 1983, in Louisville, Ky.]

REGIONAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEEDS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1983

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION,
FORESTRY, AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY,
Louisville, Ky.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in meeting room 1, west hall, Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, Hon. Roger W. Jepsen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Jepsen.

Also present: Senator Huddleston.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER W. JEPSEN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator JEPSEN. I would like to welcome all of you here today on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry, and Environment.

As the chairman of the subcommittee, I am looking forward to hearing your views on this issue of national priority and that's the preservation of the productive resource base of this Nation for both the present generation and future generations.

We no longer can afford to look the other way as our precious heritage—our soil—is depleted and eroded. Once gone, our soil never returns.

For this reason, your views on the implementation of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977—the RCA—and your thoughts on the direction of the soil conservation policies of the future are vitally important.

Before I discuss the purpose of these hearings and what we hope to accomplish, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Senator Huddleston for his support in this endeavor. Senator Huddleston, I thank you for inviting us to hold this hearing in your great State of Kentucky. I am very appreciative of your sponsorship of this, the second of our four field hearings to be held on this latest aspect of the RCA process and that's the oversight of comment on the proposed national program and final report.

I can assure you, Senator, that along with many of my Senate colleagues we are most appreciative of the key role that you have played by introducing the initial bill authorizing the RCA process and have the courage and the stick-to-it-iveness to question the effectiveness of our soil and water conservation programs.

I know I speak for many of my colleagues in the Senate who, over the years, have noticed and appreciated your deep interest in soil and water conservation issues. Your hard work in laying the foundation for the RCA process and continued support in recent years by participating in hearings and monitoring the progress of this act and supporting the efforts to keep the programs on track are valued and appreciated by all in the Senate and everyone in the Nation who is concerned with the conservation of our soil.

As a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee you have repeatedly caused Congress to realize the necessity for continued oversight in program initiative of soil and water conservation practices. The comprehensive views you have taken in supporting all aspects of soil and water conservation as part of the coordinated Federal farm program is a prospective that sometimes goes unappreciated by many Members of both the Senate and the House as well as by many other persons around the country.

By holding these hearings here in Kentucky you are indicating to me, Senator, and to the Congress and, most important, to the people of your great State of Kentucky that you are concerned for continued Federal support and direct involvement in the conservation programs is unyielding and, as always, you lead the way in helping set the stage to do a better job in providing for national direction in our soil conservation programs of this country.

I thank you for inviting me here today, Senator.

STATEMENT OF HON. WALTER D. HUDDLESTON, A U.S. SENATOR FROM KENTUCKY

Senator **Huddleston**. Thank you very much. I do want to welcome you to Kentucky and to members of your staff and members of the staff of the Agriculture Committee of the Senate who have come here for this hearing. I look forward to the testimony that we're about to receive. I would say this, that nobody in the Senate works harder for the agriculture community nor for world agriculture than Senator Roger Jepsen from Iowa. While his direct interest, being from a big grain producing State, may be somewhat different than other States, including Kentucky, he always has an open mind about our particular problems and helps in every way possible. We appreciate that very much.

I think this hearing today is an indication of his concern for what's really happening out in the rural areas and where we're headed and what our heritage is and how we are to protect it for the future.

Public hearings are a vital part of the legislative process. Hearings such as the one today enable Members of Congress to do their job of overseeing Federal programs that affect all of us. So, I want to thank all of you for participating in this hearing.

I want to extend a special thanks to the witnesses from Ohio and Indiana and from other areas who have come a long distance to present their testimony at this hearing.

The principle focus of this hearing today will be the implementation of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977—legislation that I am proud to say that I did sponsor, as Senator Jepsen indicated.

The Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, commonly referred to as RCA, required the Department of Agriculture to conduct an extensive appraisal of our Nation's soil and water resources. The RCA also required the Secretary of Agriculture, using this appraisal information, to develop and implement a national soil and water resource conservation program.

The administration recently unveiled its RCA program, which quickly became the subject of much media attention and public comment.

To date, the Department of Agriculture has recorded over 10,000 comments from Kentucky citizens. More comments were received from Kentucky than from any other State. I think that indicates how important this program is to the people of our State.

Although erosion and flood damage affect individual farmers and rural communities most directly, natural resource problems are matters of national concern. Therefore, resource conservation efforts should be strongly supported at the national level.

Federal support should be reflected in the budget and in the national soil and water resources conservation program.

There is growing awareness of the problems we face in conserving our Nation's natural resources. The RCA, through its well documented appraisal of the Nation's soil and water resources, helped raise the public's awareness of the problems.

So, we've now reached the point when it's time to begin the implementation of a sound and workable soil and water resources conservation program.

However, the administration has submitted a budget proposal for the fiscal year 1984 that essentially dismantles the existing tried and proven programs. The 1984 proposed budget does not even meet the lowest funding levels called for by the administration's own announced conservation program.

And in addition, we are told by the administration that the appropriate Federal role is to provide primarily technical assistance, while the most serious problems are to be passed along to the States.

I am particularly concerned about the inadequacies of the administration's 1984 budget proposals as they relate to conservation programs in Kentucky. About 62 percent of Kentucky's 5 million acres of cropland is in need of conservation treatment.

The administration's budget would reduce funding for the flood prevention and small watershed programs by about 40 percent and eliminate funding for new projects under the rural abandoned mine program.

In addition, the administration's proposed budget does not include funding for certain conservation programs provided for in the 1981 farm bill.

Such a program is the soil and water conservation matching grant program that the administration requested authority for, but has neglected to implement. Under this program, for a minimal Federal commitment, State and local organizations would be provided an incentive and the means to implement conservation programs.

I am also concerned about the administration's plan to have State and local governments assume sole responsibility for resolving our national soil and water resource conservation problems. State and local governments simply do not have the resources at this time to address this national problem.

So, I am fearful that, over a period of years, the cumulative effect of these proposals for conservation programs will be devastating.

We cannot afford to gamble with our Nation's greatest resource, our productive farm and forest land.

So, this hearing will help Congress in its review of the administration's conservation program. Again, I appreciate all of you coming today to discuss this important matter. I appreciate Senator Jepsen being here and participating and carrying forward this hearing.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you, Senator.

As you very ably pointed out, some of the reasons for this hearing and some of our concerns that we have—these field hearings are our effort to bring home to you, the citizens of the country, the depth of this problem. But more importantly it is to establish that we, as Senators representing you, are dedicated to solving these problems. It's to assure you that we enthusiastically do accept the responsibility for finding some solutions. But we can't do this without your help and your input.

Senator Huddleston and I both feel, as he's indicated in his opening remarks here, that enduring Federal commitment is paramount for the continued success of our soil and water conservation programs. But we are both deeply concerned that this commitment does not seem to be forthcoming from this administration. And, unfortunately, I might add this is not unique with this administration or of administrations before this administration.

Deep in the bottles of the bureaucracy in Washington, we detect the fact that good land stewardship frankly is not a priority in our overall farm effort. To us, adequate soil protection and water conservation efforts are the foundation upon which most farmers want to rely.

Our concerns are generated because of the noncommittal tone of the proposed expenditures and the conflicting statements frankly in the various reports and the final report and program document.

For example, the 1981 RCA draft report states, and I quote, "* * * even with the most optimistic outlook * * * soil erosion after 50 years would still exceed the nondegradation level." Well, in the final report that we're examining today the first objective is to lead to nondegradation of the Nation's soil and water resources.

Yet, if the most optimistic outlook is not expected to achieve nondegradation in 50 years, how can we expect a scaled down program proposed in the final report and restricted by the 1984 proposed budget to lead to the nondegradation of our soil and water resources?

Now, we have both expressed our deep concern about the priorities not forthcoming either from established Government agencies or the administration in its proposals and offers for budgeted funds today.

I know that Secretary Block and Chief Pete Myers of the Soil Conservation Service share our concerns. We can't progress without your interest and support. We need to know if you share our concerns, where your needs differ, and what you feel is necessary to help you carry out soil and water conservation on the farm.

So, that's why we are here today.

We went to the administration first and we asked for a full and complete explanation of the RCA report. In March of this year we had our first hearing. Now, we're traveling across the country to listen to the views and the opinions of all of you. We held our first field hearing yesterday in Jackson, Miss. We had representatives from Mississippi, from Louisiana, from the State of Alabama. And we go from here to Iowa. We go from Iowa to New England. In those areas we will hear from Iowa, Colorado, Utah; we will hear from the regions—all the States in the northeastern part of the country. Additionally, I am simultaneously conducting a series of Joint Economic Committee hearings to explore all aspects of farm programs—their current effectiveness and their future appropriateness to the ongoing farm policies.

As part of that effort, I will be asking Government officials, private sector analysts, specialists in academia, farms, and other citizens how soil and water conservation efforts can be better integrated into our farm policies.

The RCA hearings will culminate now at the end of June. The subcommittee will hold the final 1983 hearing on the RCA in Washington, to listen to the views of the farm organization leaders who represent many of your interests as well.

So, we've heard the administration's view. We now come to you for your opinion and comment.

We're not telling you what Washington thinks or what Washington wants you to think, or to know. We are asking you first about what you think, what your needs and what your suggestions are.

Then we will return to Washington and share what we've learned from you folks today. Congress will debate and deliberate the issues, the questions, and the problems. From these discussions we hope to reach a balance that will serve as a guide to Congress in directing the administration as to what to do. It's what the people want.

We are also happy, I would announce at this time, to accept testimony from anyone here today who is not on the panel, when we finish, but has something prepared for insertion in the record. Finally, we invite all of you to sign the book at the back of the room, with your name and address, for the record, if you haven't already done so.

Thank you for coming. And I thank you, Senator, again for inviting us. I appreciate the tremendous efforts and help that your staff has provided in making these arrangements and in setting up and coordinating the witnesses. I look forward to this hearing.

I read the schedule this morning in some detail and it's quite exciting. I would ask that you introduce the witnesses. This is your territory, your State and I'm honored to be here. I thank you for inviting me, again, and I do know that your first witness is a former neighbor of mine from Minnesota. I learned that this morning.

Senator HUDDLESTON. I might say before we start, Senator, that we would have several more people here, that we know of, except for the fact that this is about the first day this spring that our farmers could get into the field and begin to get their corn planted. A lot of our farmers are trying to take advantage of this break to catch up. It is almost too late already, but the ox is in the ditch a lot of places around this State and we were working hard to get it back on top. I think the PIK program may be the salvation in more ways than one according to the way this spring has developed.

We're glad to have our first witness this morning, Jackie Swigart, who is the secretary of the Kentucky Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

Please come forward Jackie. We'll be glad to hear from you. You're doing an outstanding job for our State and have for many years been a leader in conservation and environmental protection in our State.

STATEMENT OF HON. JACKIE SWIGART, SECRETARY, KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. SWIGART. Thank you, Senator Huddleston and Senator Jepsen.

Members of the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and staff, I am Jackie Swigart, secretary of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I appreciate very much the opportunity that you have provided for us to present our views regarding the national conservation program as published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1982.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet, which I head, is a large umbrella-type environmental agency that has many programs relating either directly or indirectly to the national conservation program. In this cabinet are many divisions and units which deal with air, water, solid and hazardous waste, forestry, abandoned mine lands, and surface mining, in addition to soil and water conservation. It was formed in 1972 to coordinate the environmental programs. Today, I would like to comment on the program put forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture which has many good points along with some glaring deficiencies.

First, I would like to comment on the concept called targeting. Targeting of resources to an area which has critical erosion problems would on the surface seem to be a prudent use of these resources. However, other areas which have conservation problems will be short shrifted in my opinion. For example, the national program refers to two national priorities that relate to Kentucky which are erosion and upland watershed protection. If resources are pulled from an area and directed to the targeted areas then it is likely that the areas from which the resources are taken probably will wind up with either a water quality or a waste management problem which is not a national priority. If targeting is to be followed as a way to deal with critical problems, then clearly additional appropriations should be provided to fund this concept.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet has the responsibility of protecting and improving water quality in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In Kentucky, the soil and water conservation program developed by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, as a result of the RCA, shows that we are losing 141 million tons of topsoil per year. Silt is the largest contributor to water pollution in the Commonwealth. Therefore, we need strong conservation programs in all areas, not just the targeted areas, to prevent erosion, protect the land resource base as well as to protect and improve water quality.

I was concerned to find that there is no mention of the protection of our prime and unique farmland in the final program. According to the response on the preferred program that was released in 1981, this would have had a high priority. This was especially true in Kentucky which submitted over 10,000 responses out of the 80,000 or more total nationally. In Kentucky, Governor Brown created an Agricultural Land Study and Policy Committee to study land conversion and make recommendations to the Governor and to the general assembly. As a result of this committee's work, legislation was passed allowing for the creation of agricultural districts. Since the law became effective last July, we have protected about 15,000 acres of good farmland in Kentucky. This is a small part of a national effort and should be recognized by the Department of Agriculture.

The national program includes two schemes of funding the conservation program outlined in the document, high-bound and low-bound. Under high-bound the increased cost of doing business would be added to the appropriations each year permitting the conservation program to remain constant. There would be no real increase in total outlay for conservation. I have learned that under the high-bound scheme of funding appropriations for the conservation program for fiscal year 1984 would have to be $971 million. Under the low-bound funding scheme appropriations for fiscal year 1984 would have to be $698 million. My understanding is that the Department and the administration have proposed funding of $474 million for SCS and $68 million for ACP for a total of $545,000,500 which as you can see is even considerably less than the low-bound funding outlined in the national conservation program. To me, this is totally inadequate and I urge you as Members of our Congress not to allow this to happen. Funding for something as vital to all our citizens as the protection of our land and water resources is money well spent for an investment in the future.

The national program also calls for matching grants around $30 million to conservation districts through State conservation agencies. As I understand it, $10 million for this program has been suggested but the administration's budget proposal has no request for grants to conservation districts. We feel this should be funded and evidently the Congress does too, as it was included in the Food and Agriculture Act of 1981.

For many years I have felt the conservation program was one of the most effective we have for protecting and improving our environment. The assistance provided to the local people through State commissions and conservation districts has meant much to Kentucky and I am sure other States throughout this Nation. The governing bodies of these districts give their time and efforts to protection and improving this great natural resource base. I think we at the State level, and most assuredly, you at the Federal level have the responsibility of providing these folks with technical and financial resources to help them do their job. Nowhere in government do I feel we get more for the taxpayers dollars than through the conservation program. This is because of the folks out there at the local level who are dedicated conservationists working with their neighbors carrying out a conservation program.

The national conservation program has some good points. Targeting is one, but it should be funded with additional appropriations rather than robbing existing conservation programs. Upland watershed protection is also a worthy goal and should be pursued. In addition to flood protection, we need alternate supplies of domestic waters for our urban areas. The abandoning of State and local coordinating committees was a positive step.

The national program lacks adequate funding, and does not address the protection of our prime agriculture land, and water pollution, and land pollution, as a national priority. In addition, the progam talks about base assistance left in areas which are not targeted. As yet, no one from the Department of Agriculture has been able to define what is meant by base assistance.

I appreciate the opportunity to come and express my feelings to this committee. And I hope as you go around the country and hold your public hearings that you will, indeed, listen to what the citizens of this Nation are telling you about conservation programs.

Thank you very much.

Senator HUDDLESTON. I just have one question. I would like to get your comment on the attitude and the movement in Washington today, which as you know is to shift more and more responsibility and cost for various programs to State and local districts. Conservation is one of those areas that there is some suggestion that the States should assume more of the responsibility.

What is your opinion of the ability of the States to assume this kind of responsibility?

Ms. SWIGART. I don't think the Commonwealth of Kentucky at this time is prepared to assume that responsibility; clearly the local conservation districts are not. And when you talk about land, to me, it's a national resource and one that should be supported and funded by the Congress.

We have not yet learned to be totally self-sufficient in each of our States and we do ship food and agricultural products, not only throughout the country, but around the world. So I feel very strongly that everyone in this country has a share in what happens to Kentucky's land. And I at the same time don't think that we are ready to assume this responsibility nor should we.

Senator HUDDLESTON. The States are having about as much trouble with their budgets now as the Federal Government.

Ms. SWIGART. Right. No question about it. I think we are going to be facing some very serious environmental problems in the next session of our general assembly because the Federal Government is making this shift rather quickly and it's going to be a difficult time for us.

Senator JEPSEN. May I pursue that further, Mrs. Swigart? Did I understand you to say that you did not think that we should shift to the States the responsibility for administering the soil conservation program?

Ms. SWIGART. No; I think the funding is the thing that I think we're not ready to assume. I think we have in Kentucky a very good set up for dealing with the conservation programs themselves though our soil and water commission and our local conservation districts. The administration of the funds, I think is—we're ready for that, but the funding would concern me.

Senator JEPSEN. Do you think that soil conservation programs that are federally funded should be included and integrated into the other—the total farm programs and made mandatory where there is a receiving of funds? For example the PIK program: Do you feel that we could have some mandatory soil conservation practices as part of that program in the future or would you rather they be voluntary?

Ms. SWIGART. I think we will get to that point. I think you will find that the agricultural community resists the making of the programs mandatory. That has been a frustration that I have had trying to deal with the environmental pollution, because I think those conservation plans and programs at the local level are the very thing that can prevent some of the water pollution problems that we suffer.

But I think you will find a great resistance to forcing that on the agriculture community.

Senator JEPSEN. So I think what I heard you say is that you do not support the mandatory programs, but you feel that there might be some of that coming?

Ms. SWIGART. Yes. I think if we put it off too much longer, we will be faced with such serious problems that we will have to face up to it. And then there would be a tremendous educational job that would have to take place at the local level.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Thank you very much.

Now, we have a tristate panel next. Raymond Willett, the president of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts; Earl Blank, vice president of the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and Bob Pitts, the president of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

STATEMENT OF RAYMOND WILLETT, PRESIDENT, KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. WILLETT. Thank you Senator Huddleston and Senator Jepsen.

Honorable committee members and staff, I am Raymond Willett, president of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts. I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our views on the national conservation program. I have been involved in conservation work all of my life and have served numerous offices within the KACD including president, vice president, secretary-treasurer and director. I am a farmer in Mason County and a conservation district supervisor. I have firsthand knowledge of what conservation programs mean and in addition to expressing the views of KACD.

Our association is and has been a strong supporter of the RCA process under which the national conservation program was developed. KACD believes that conservation resources should be applied in a manner that produces the best results for the protection of our natural resource base.

Since the national conservation program was released last December we had the opportunity to look at the program in a comparison to the preferred program which was presented in 1981 for public comment. We feel the national program reflects some of the public's responses, but falls short in other areas. First of all, is targeting. No one can argue that resources should be placed where the problems are located. However, under the present means of securing these funds the association feels it is unfair to areas other than those targeted. And up to 25 percent over a 5-year period of resources are taken for the targeted areas then the nontargeted areas are going to suffer in their conservation efforts. Our association represents all areas of the State and feels that targeting funds should have been additional appropriations.

The national, State, and local coordinating boards were omitted in the final program. KACD supports this in that we feel State commissions and local districts are most capable of handling this coordination and are charged by law to do so. According to public responses, programs for the protection of prime and unique farmlands were given a high priority, yet in the final program there was no mention of this item. KACD supports programs to protect our best agricultural land from the conversion to other uses. KACD does not want to strangle any development, but rather aim it at marginal and submarginal land. In fact, KACD has worked and assisted in getting legislation passed in Kentucky which provides for the creation of agricultural districts aimed at prime farmland protection. We feel this definitely should have been a part of the conservation program—of the USDA conservation program. Another provision of the USDA conservation program is for matching grants to conservation districts through State conservation agencies. KACD supports grants to districts for it is a positive approach to solving Kentucky's natural resource problems as it provides for the increased technical assistance. Although it is outlined in the national conservation program, no funds have been provided to implement it. KACD feels that part of the national conservation program should be funded, but with "new appropriations," rather than taking from existing programs. The national conservation program provides for two schemes of funding: high-bound and low-bound. Evidently, the Department has proposed the low-bound scheme of funding conservation programs. With low-bound funding, appropriated funds remain consistent each year. Therefore, in just a few years the conservation program would be diluted to very unacceptable levels due to inflation, unless Congress dictates otherwise.

Even if the high-bound scheme were followed, the conservation program would just stay even in buying power. We can as a nation—we cannot afford to take this chance with our natural resource base.

On behalf of KACD I want to thank you again for giving us the opportunity to present our views regarding the national conservation program.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT PITTS, PRESIDENT, OHIO FEDERATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. PITTS. Senator Huddleston and Senator Jepsen, my name is Robert Pitts. I am the president of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Honorable members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and respective staff, I am pleased to represent the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in making this statement. As president of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, I represent 440 supervisors who govern the programs of 88 soil and water conservation districts in Ohio.

I wish to compliment the members of your committee and staff for your efforts to gain the input of soil and water conservation district supervisors and others in regard to the final report on the RCA program.

Although there are a number of topics that could be addressed which concern us, I believe the major issue is that of adequate funding for the proposed program. Without an adequate source of budgeted funds, the proposals for the redirecting program scope and proposals for targeting, matching grants, and others cannot be successfully implemented.

Although a majority of public responses to earlier RCA drafts demonstrated support for the current conservation delivery system, and even after the nationwide responses to the RCA public response form favored alternative No. 1 or continuation of the current program trends, the final report proposes to redirect current programs as well as to implement new ones. I am concerned that the final report will result in shifting USDA funds from one pocket to another, rather than gaining conservation on the land. We do need a more effective conservation effort, but to gain it will take an increased commitment of funds.

The Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts supports the report's recommendation to strengthen the role of State and local government programs. We believe that Federal block grants and matching grants should be used to supplement rather than replace current Federal funding and USDA assistance programs. The proposed programs can provide the needed flexibility to deal with local issues that the national guidelines fail to recognize. The programs can do much to encourage additional programs and funding initiatives at State and local level. However, we oppose the initiation of programs which simply redirects the current program and sacrifices the land treatment and maintenance practices of one area to fund and staff the programs in a targeted area.

I wish to strongly emphasize to you that the final report and the future USDA programs should not be considered too expensive. The 1979 Harris Poll indicated the general public was concerned about soil erosion and the potential reduction in the productive capacity of our Nation's soil and water resources. A majority of those polled expressed a willingness to contribute, as necessary, to an expanded conservation program.

The Rodale Press study of the food system "Empty Breadbasket" reports that we lose more dollars in soil losses annually than the total of USDA funding on erosion control programs since the program began.

As we look at the land use and the intensive agricultural pressures on our farmland today, and the accelerating erosion rates, a much greater funding commitment is justified.

In Ohio, local and State governments have provided funds and personnel to enable soil and water conservation districts to expand the program scope and land treatment beyond Federal program efforts. At present, Ohio leads the Nation in the total number of soil and water conservation district employees. But these non-Federal contributions cannot expand the program rapidly enough and certainly should not be viewed as a program to absorb the reduction of Federal funding.

I view the RCA program as a positive movement by USDA. It has sampled the public opinion and has resulted from the most comprehensive natural resources inventory ever compiled by the USDA. I see the final report as the first step for action. The second step will be harder. It requires renewed funding commitment.

The 1983 funding proposal in the USDA final report showed no increase in those of past years. The effect of inflation has greatly reduced the purchasing power of SCS technical assistance appropriations. Construction costs have also increased, creating even less accomplishment with the $3,500 ASCS cost share limit per farmer. The report suggests that less than half of the erosion problem is being addressed by the current program.

The final report's "Projected range of funding for USDA soil and water conservation programs, 1982 to 1987" include options for increasing programs above, or reducing them below, the 1983 base year. The fiscal year 1983 budget request served as a low-bound base, which provides no adjustment for inflation at $735 million. The final report suggests future budgets are likely to be between the high bound and low bound. I include in my testimony a copy of page 34 from the final report to which I have added the likely budget for fiscal year 1984 of $694 million for this program.

I am extremely disappointed to note that this amount in the very first year after the RCA process has resulted in a failure to provide adequate funds even to maintain the former USDA funding level.

I would hope that this committee will work with other Members of the Congress to secure an adequate level of funding for these important programs.

I recognize that the final report recommends a cross-compliance element of requiring conservation plans for recipients of Farmers Home Administration farmownership loans and soil conservation loans. The OFSWCD and our north central region of States has supported a cross-compliance role for USDA. We recognize that erosion control is linked with decisions on cropping patterns, and feel that USDA programs that assist farmers should also guide their conservation decisions. We feel that it is justified to expect that a person being subsidized by the USDA should comply with a good conservation program for eligibility.

When we are dealing with private landowners without Farmers Home Administration assistance we are working primarily in a voluntary program through which land treatment measures are installed due to land stewardship motives. As a result, I wish to emphasize that there is no substitute for timely technical assistance and educational programs based on research.

Although land treatment practices such as conservation tillage and management practices of crop rotations, pasture fertility, and reseeding, and others are cost effective; in many cases the conservation practices or complete conservation plan needed for a farm unit will not provide returns over the cost to the farmer. Farmers should not be expected to sacrifice income by installing long-term practices which primarily benefit the public. This requires the need for a long-term financial commitment, not limited to $3,500 per year.

In the final analysis, whatever programs USDA attempts to provide still must appeal to the land user, who ultimately makes the decision on how best to manage his land. His voluntary action should always be stimulated, and only when incentives are available but remain unused, or when serious resource abuse occurs, should regulatory mandates be used.

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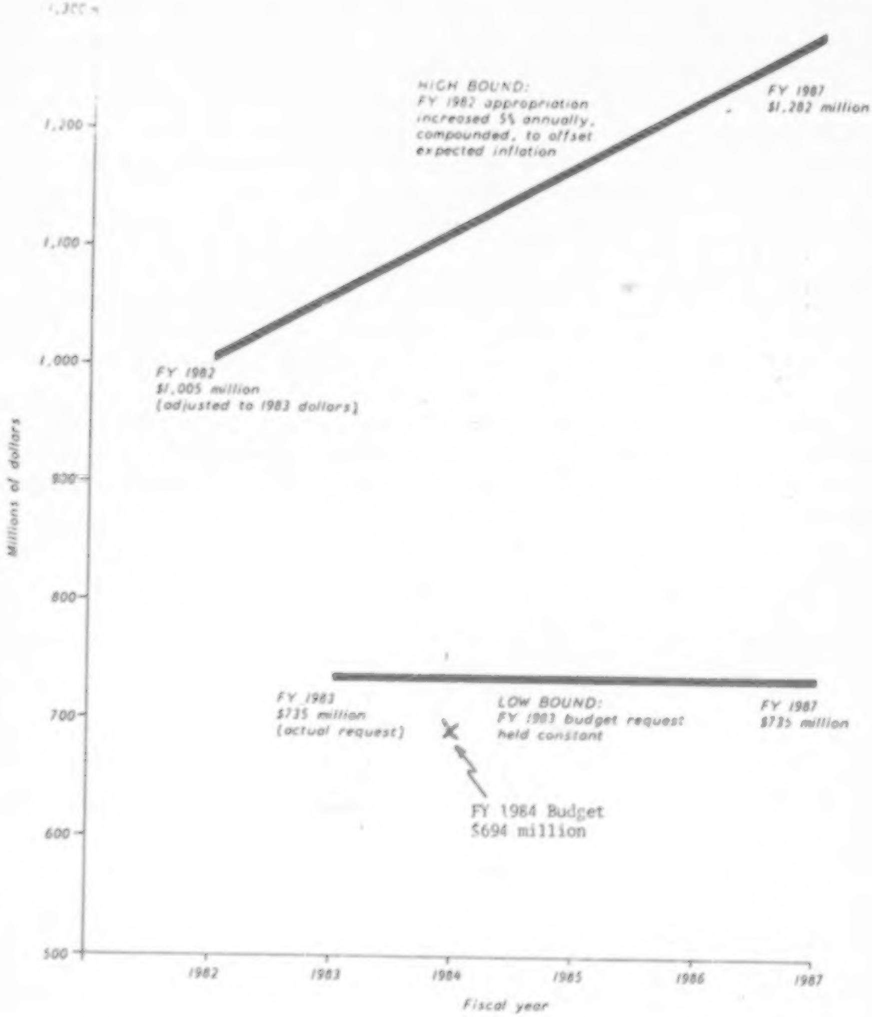

Figure 7.--Projected range of funding for USDA soil and water conservation programs, 1982-87.

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STATEMENT OF EARL BLANK, SECRETARY, INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. BLANK. I'm Earl Blank, the secretary—I got a promotion somewhere here. I'm reporting for Howard Guse, president of the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and I might say the reason I am reporting, he's in the northwest corner of Indiana and I'm just across the river from here and it was easier for me to get here.

To members of the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, the Senate committee.

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts does have a concern of the adequacy of the national program for soil and water conservation. Treating "the worst first" concept of targeting is good and makes sense.

Our fears concern the areas that are on the fine line of being vulnerable to erosion. They are good soils, but to deny them the technical assistance of ongoing programs would be a great mistake. We could lose the progress in conservation we've gained over the last decade or so.

We would like to compare soil conservation to our national defense. A country that will take care of its soil has a better chance in times of national emergency.

We wish there could be more emphasis put on agreements made by an owner and then destroyed by the next land occupier. We feel that you cannot buy conservation, we have to convince farmers to farm with conservation in mind.

And I might add there if we have to have a reduced budget, education would probably be the place that it would get the most mileage out of.

With these ideas in mind, we support targeting and the national program of soil and water conservation, but not at the expense of ongoing programs.

Thank you. Howard Guse, president of the Indiana association.

Senator JEPSEN. I thank you for those reports. You gentlemen represent the firing line, the action-seeking place, and the receiving ends of both the complaints and requests from people who are actually doing the soil conservation to also receiving the directions and trying to interpret the things that culminate from the ASCS, SCS, and other programs. You know, in listening yesterday and here today, I wonder why it is and would you please give me your opinion on why members of the various bureaus, especially the Office of Management and Budget seem to actually show indifference to soil conservation needs in this country?

I have a reason for asking that question. Do you, either or each one of you, care to offer a reason why you think that we don't have the support, as important as the soil conservation is, that we would like to have from various funding agencies in Washington?

Mr. WILLETT. I don't really know the answer to that. But it doesn't seem that you get the appropriations put out for conservation to be as important a thing as conservation really is. You have money going to different things that I believe could be better spent in conservation.

Mr. **Blank.** I would say part of our problem is still education. One example I can think of real quick is I don't think some of those people really realize what it takes to grow our food in this country. I can remember one occasion when an assistant out of the White House was in our district or in our general area that didn't even know the difference between corn and soybeans. Now, if they don't know that difference, I'm sure some of them don't know what it takes to grow a crop and what it takes to keep the soil and water in shape so we can produce with it.

Mr. **Pitts.** I guess in answer to your question it's a matter of priority. You are closer to them down there and if you don't know the answer, I don't know either. I guess that's one reason why we're down here to get some of them answers.

Senator **Jepsen.** I'm just wondering whether over the years education—we hear that word used a lot when we talk about soil conservation—educating the public, educating each other, and in this area of educating each other I wonder if those of us who are deeply concerned about soil conservation have done all of the work that we should be doing and ought to have done in educating those folks in Congress and those folks in the Government administrating the program. Or, even more specifically, I, in reviewing these programs and visiting with folks that are working with the RCA and others, I get the feeling that the crystal-clear explanation of the needs and the justification for funding for the programs may not have really been laid down like they are over the years. That's why Senator Huddleston and his foresight, I think, has taken the lead in providing this basis, RCA really, which gets at that problem. If we can just get that off of the ground and get it laid out so the people can work with it.

Senator **Huddleston.** I might comment that one of our problems in all rural programs and all farm programs is that so much of the Congress, of course, is urbanized. And, we certainly have plenty of problems in our urban centers, and we've concentrated on those to a great extent in recent years. But, when I first went to Washington they were quoting one Congressman who said that as long as every corner in his district had a supermarket on it he wasn't worried about the farm problems. He didn't seem to have a realization of how that food got on those shelves.

But, at any rate that is a problem that we're having to deal with constantly. I think the RCA has done an excellent job of creating an additional awareness throughout the land, and in areas where hearings were held. I was very pleased at the appraisal process. I think the participation by the citizens in the individual States was outstanding. And, the appraisal was a very adequate document.

Now the question is whether or not we've got enough awareness of it—how many Members of Congress have actually studied it or understand it or even care about it to bring forth the necessary action for its proper implementation. That's the value of this kind of hearing. Hopefully, when Senator Jepsen completes his total series and puts together a report, we can get more people to read it with a greater understanding.

Conservation, of course, in the appropriations process is also under a great deal of pressure. When the agriculture committee goes back to its authorizing responsibility, we're going to have imposed on us the budget resolution, if one is finally passed, that will require us to make cuts in the various agriculture programs.

So where do we make those cuts?

Conservation is not a problem that is staring us in the face every day. The crisis is not on top of us like it is for the farmer that's trying to meet his mortgage payments or his loan payments this month. So the pressure is pretty strong to keep pushing off those things that are not of absolutely immediate crisis nature.

How do each of you see the shifting of more responsibility for the actual cost of these programs to the State and local government? Do you see any room there for additional financial support?

Mr. **Willett**. I would have to go along like my lady that reported ahead of me: I don't believe that the State would be able to take care of the problem in their budget. I believe we got into this due to the inflationary time that we're living in and the people, as you were talking, their budget was so tight that they had to tear the fences out and farm the farm from hill to hill and it created more problems in the line of erosion and as far as trying to solve those type of problems sometimes they are pretty hard to cope with.

Senator **Jepsen**. What about Ohio, Mr. Pitts?

Mr. **Pitts**. We already have shouldered that responsibility and we are working hard on it. Last bi-annum we had a million dollars per year going toward the districts and we're in a budget hearing right now and it come out of house with $600,000 more to fund the district per year and back at the local level the county commissioners have come up with over $2 million. We've got laws on the books in Ohio that Ohio can fund the districts one-to-one matching funds and they aren't up to that point. We are trying to get them up there. But we're spending a lot of money on it, but we feel that soil conservation is of such a priority that we've got to have more money from all aspects.

Senator **Huddleston**. Would your State be in a position to match the grants that may come from the proposal of the administration?

Mr. **Pitts**. I feel we can.

Senator **Huddleston**. How about Indiana?

Mr. **Blank**. I dont't think we have the funds—least the legislature doesn't think so—we attempted to get additional funds in this past legislature and we came up with zero additional. I really feel like that in the future we'll be able to make some progress in that area, but not to a great extent.

Senator **Huddleston**. Are any of you dealing directly with the rural abandoned mine program? What is your experience with the ramp program?

Mr. **Pitts**. We are in Ohio and I am not well enough acquainted with it to really answer your question. I know that we've got quite a bit of ramp money coming into Ohio and my understanding was this last session of your Congress kind of messed up the ways that money comes back to the State and I just heard the other day they have got it straightened around where the SCS can get some of this money on the ground.

Senator **Huddleston**. Right. We think we have, but some States wanted it to go one direction and other States in another direction. The conference last year kind of messed it up, as sometimes happens. But we do feel like we're getting it back on the right track.

What about Kentucky?

Mr. **Willett**. I think we've done a real good job working with the ramp program and it's going to help out wonderful.

Mr. **Blank**. Southwestern Indiana has had some good experiences with the ramp program. Their only concern is they're not getting it fast enough.

Senator **Huddleston**. This, of course comes from the rural abandoned mine fund which is already there, been collected and can't be used for any other purpose, collected as a fee on coal production. It's unfortunate that in our bookkeeping system that these expenditures count against our deficit, and increase the deficit even though there is no additional liability. Of course, from the taxpayer's standpoint he's already paid it. He's not going to pay it anyhow. It's paid by the fees on coal mines. We have been trying to get more of that fund available to the State and hopefully we can.

Senator **Jepsen**. I have one question I ask of everyone in these hearings and have at every one of the hearings over the past years and that is: In your opinion should the Federal Government require some sort of conservation practices in return for Federal assistance in farm programs? The words that are most commonly used mandatory versus voluntary.

Mr. **Willett**. Yes; I would support that. We have talked about the PIK program here in Kentucky and feel that more conservation or the payment of more conservation practices on the land probably could be used in the PIK program to a real advantage, to a big advantage. That is to use some of your surplus grain as payment for some of the conservation practices that are performed on the land.

Senator **Jepsen**. What I hear you say is that you have provided some incentive.

Mr. **Willett**. Right. Right.

Senator **Huddleston**. That's a little different than mandatory. I saw some people gasp when you said you support mandatory programs. Most people like to avoid anything mandatory.

Senator **Jepsen**. I know that and I'm not either advocating it or not advocating it—I asked the question. I want to make that clear.

So you would say some incentives and use of creativity in incentives maybe—they call it son of PIK or something like that where they add some incentive by way of payment time for some real good conservation program.

How about you, Mr. Pitts?

Mr. **Pitts**. I agree. You've got to have some incentive. If you have an incentive program as good as the PIK program we'll get a lot of our conservation money drawn. And we've got an exceptional year here in this PIK program to get a lot of conservation money drawn. The farmers have got a little more money in their pocket with the PIK program and they definitely have got more time. If it hadn't have been so wet here they would have had themselves all planted and could have been working on that idle ground, putting some conservation measures on it.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, in your experience, did you foresee that the recipients of the PIK payments were intending to put some permanent conservation in place and were planning to do that; did you get that feeling this year?

Mr. **Pitts**. Sure. I believe so. We've got a funny bunch of farmers out there. They're steward, they're not going to throw it away. And that's what you are doing on land if you're not farming it in a conserving manner.

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes, sir. How about Indiana?

Mr. **Blank**. Mandatory conservation I would have to say I'm sure would still be no with most farmers. That is, if you are just going to tell them they have to put conservation in for the right to farm. But——

Senator **Jepsen** [interrupting]. No, not the right to farm; the right to participate in Government programs.

Mr. **Blank**. I'm aware—I was getting to that.

In other words, cross-compliance, yes, I think a lot of us would feel like that in order to get some of these assistance programs, it would only make sense to get some conservation on the land in return.

Senator **Jepsen**. What sort of incentive would lead you to apply conservation practices on your land?

Mr. **Willett**. Well, I do it without an incentive basically, but on the other hand anytime that you can see some long-range results from the incentive I think I'd be in favor of taking advantage of it.

Mr. **Pitts**. We've got some practices that have come along here in the last few years that are cost effective and this helps. Conservation tillage; we've got a practive that keeps the soil in the land and makes us money too and we didn't have that basically 10 years ago.

Senator **Jepsen**. Are you talking about minimum till?

Mr. **Pitts**. Minimum till, no till or just chisel plow. There's a lot of ground that could be handled just with a chisel plow and wouldn't have to roll them over with over——

Senator **Jepsen**. I've heard it called, as you say, soil-toil in Ohio.

Mr. **Pitts**. I haven't heard that, but it sounds good.

Senator **Jepsen**. Soil-toil in Ohio. Minimum till is on the way.

Mr. **Pitts**. It's here to stay.

Senator **Jepsen**. Any other comments that any of you have before closing.

Mr. **Pitts**. Appreciate your hearing our conversation.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very much, Gentleman.

Senator **Huddleston**. Our next panel is: Thomas E. Neal, chairman of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission; Calvin Kiracofe, chairman of the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission; and Lawrence Vance, the executive secretary of the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission and president of the National Association of State Conservation Administrators.

Gentleman, starting on the left side here, identify yourself for the record and make your statements.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS E. NEAL, CHAIRMAN, KENTUCKY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mr. Neal. Senator Huddleston, Senator Jepsen. Committee members and respective staffs, my name is Thomas E. Neal, and I am presently serving as chairman of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

Senator **Jepsen**. Excuse me.

Mr. **Neal**. Mr. Jepsen.

Senator **Jepsen**. May I add that I should have stated this in the beginnng of the meeting; Everyone who has a prepared statement, your statements will be entered into the record as if read in full. So they will be there, so if you would care to summarize or deviate without using them, please know that all statements, prepared statements, will be entered into the record as if read. So they will be there in total. You may proceed.

Mr. **Neal**. Thank you very much. That may shorten some of the statement.[1]

Basically, for the information the committee has set up is:

The Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission wants to go on record to the effect that it has a basic responsibility of guiding the conservation agencies in providing—finding and providing resources for the 121 conservations districts in Kentucky.

The final national conservation program has provisions in it to provide grants to conservation districts through State conservation agencies. This has been brought out through Senator Huddleston, I believe in some of your questions to some of the prior individuals who testified.

Our commission and, I believe, most of the districts that support this part of the program. Through this system we think that we can provide some technical assistance to the districts to intensify our conservation efforts. Our districts in Kentucky are financially responsible. We have a required audit program in the State statutes and would be able to utilize these funds in the most efficient manner.

In addition, if these grants were made on a matching basis I think we would find that the districts would be willing to come up with their portion of these funds from local sources. Many districts at the present time are assisting or securing local funds and employing part-time individuals during peak periods of the year in order to assist the district in putting practices on the land anyway.

However, at least information furnished to me, there has been no funding and there is no funding in the current budget proposal for the grants to be made at the present time.

In addition, we believe that any grant program should be in the form of additional appropriation as opposed to reducing the funds to be allocated to the existing programs.

Now, the final program makes no provisions for the protection of prime farmland or the reduction in the conservation to other uses. As previously indicated in Ms. Swigart's testimony, Kentucky has had legislation setting up the provisions for the creation of agricultural districts which have now taken in approximately 15,000 acres in Kentucky in this district. We feel like, if the Department of Agriculture is as serious about attempting to maintain the agricultural base in this country, that there needs to be or could be some type of program to assist the States and local communities in protecting this prime farmland resource.

Now, there are—the soil and water conservation commission has an obligation to all of our districts in Kentucky. We have two priorities and two major practices which relate to our State; the erosion and upper watershed protection. We have districts in the Commonwealth of Kentucky which are participating and will participate in these programs and targeted areas—my home county is one of those targeted areas—targeted area programs on erosion.

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[1] See p. 378 for the prepared statement of Mr. Neal.

However, there are also other districts which have problems with soil or water pollutions, solid waste disposal; problems created by the mining industry and oil and gas industry. These districts, we feel, should be given some assistance in solving these national resource problems.

Now, the final program fortunately—in order to avoid duplication—does eliminate the State and local coordinating boards. Kentucky has already handled that situation and has in place it's soil and water conservation commission with local districts. There is no need for it. I'm assuming many other States are in the same position.

Now, back to the targeted area program. The soil and water conservation commission supports the theory of having targeted areas because there are certain areas that have problems that are very critical. However, we feel once again it's a matter of funding, that the funds to handle these problems should be new appropriations and should not penalize the existing programs. Unfortunately when you end up in a targeted area program, frequently you end up penalizing those districts which exercise good control and whose members have done a good job in conservation practices.

Now, let's get to the high-bound and the low-bound funding. This has been mentioned by everyone in here previously.

Senator JEPSEN. Excuse me. Can you hear in the back of the room?

Mr. NEAL [continuing]. Without beating the points to death, it's my understanding that the funding as proposed in the current proposed budget is a low-bound funding mode and I—this is not included in my prepared statement—but it seems to me that conservation is somewhat akin to preventive medicine. And if you feel as I personally do, that the agricultural resource base in this country is vital to its survival, and if we note it, then it's illogical to reduce the funding of that type of program until it becomes so critical that you need an immense transfusion or infusion of funds to attempt to resolve the problem. And there is, you know, if diet and rest can prevent pneumonia, why wait until the patient has it. The point being that there is no earthly reason that I can see to not make provisions for inflation and increased cost in the allocation of funds for conservation purposes.

I think that basically sums up the position of the soil and water conservation commission at this point. Of course, we have surplus commodities, but a year and a half or 2 years from now we might not have.

We think that the agriculture base is a vital assest of this country and would like to thank you for the opportunity to present this statement and appreciate your attention.

STATEMENT OF CALVIN KIRACOFE, CHAIRMAN, OHIO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mr. **Kiracofe**. Senator Jepsen and Senator Huddleston and members of this committee. I'm Calvin Kiracofe.[1] I'm a farmer from northwestern Ohio and what's known a the Old Black Swamp area. We appreciate this whole RCA process and the fact that an effort is being made to find out what the real needs of conservation are and that the Federal Government is interested through the RCA process in trying to come up with some help to strengthen the local districts.

We are familiar with the grant process in Ohio. We've been receiving grants from the State legislature now since 1959 and has previously been mentioned last year the districts, the 88 districts, received $1 million and $2.5 million were raised by the local county commissioners to match that money—to be with that money that was provided by the State legislature. This money is being used by the districts to provide additional technical personnel. Some of them are soil conservation and some of them are specialists in the area of forestry. It's also being used to provide equipment, no till equipment and conservation tillage equipment. My own district today will be having four no till corn planters and two no till drills running and each one of those drills and corn planter will have a technician with them who has experience in helping the farmers.

This is done on a demonstration basis and they're out there and we feel that this is one of the ways that we can use additional moneys to demonstrate to the farmers as to the values received by no till equipment.

Senator **Jepsen**. Is that equipment donated by dealers or was it bought by our district?

Mr. **Kiracofe**. The first piece of equipment was donated by a dealer free and we gave him $500 for the use of it. Today most of the equipment is owned by the district. Some of it is owned through a grant that we received from the Environmental Protection Agency.

We feel that additional funds could be used in Ohio because we have already had experience in using them, we have the employees and the management personnel to use it and we have had the experience in handling public funds.

Now, I am not going to spend very much time on the grant and the targeting part of the program. It's already been mentioned and we agree that the need to protect all of the land is there and we ought not reduce the protection of any area by taking money from it and putting into targeting. This ought to be new and additional funds.

We also feel that if grants are to come, there ought to be criteria put out early enough and so far we see no criteria. If our districts wanted to apply for grants that might be available, we wouldn't know where to go to find that criteria. It takes quite a bit of time in a local district to draw up the needs and to get the request from the county commissioners and so forth to raise the money. So we would emphasize that if and when grants become available we ought to have some time, leadtime, considerable leadtime in order to get a grant in.

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[1] See p. 379 for the prepared statement of Mr. Kiracofe.

I don't think I'm going to say anything else except that we strongly support the grant and the targeting as necessary, but we strongly feel that it ought not come out of existing funds.

STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE VANCE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, OHIO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION, AND PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE CONSERVATION ADMINISTRATORS

Mr. **Vance.** Senator Jepsen and Senator Huddleston, my name is Larry Vance.[1] I'm chief of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and I would present an apology to start. I'm sorry that our director, Myrl Shoemaker is not able to be here this morning. In fact, plans changed just this morning on a hearing in the legislature he had to attend.

My mission today is to provide testimony not as a State agency representative though but as president of the National Association of State Soil Conservation Administrative Officers and by doing so I would attempt to try to provide you some insight as to the way we look at it from a national perspective, some examples of the various States and comments I've received at this point.

My—I might also mention that I've had the opportunity personally to work in the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa in the soil and water conservation programs for the State agencies of all three. In fact, Senator Jepsen shortly after being elected we blazed some trails together over in the State of Iowa, familiarizing and dealing with many of the conservation concerns that they had to deal with.

In regard to the issue at hand, again I represent the National Association of State Conservation Administrators and wish to commend USDA on the intent to strengthen the conservation partnership with existing local agencies and organizations. The USDA's effort to more closely establish objectives, set priorities and coordinate decisionmaking with State and local government will provide an opportunity for even better meeting the soil and water conservation needs.

Providing the opportunity, however, is not enough. Historically, the natural resources programs have been underfunded and understaffed at the Federal, State, and local level.

I might just for a moment divert from my text simply to look at history. This soil and water conservation program began in 1933 as a Federal program under the old Soil Erosion Service and in 1937 the first real directional change occurred as President Franklin Roosevelt wrote each Governor and encouraged the creation of the district enabling legislation. In that letter he made what I feel a very significant statement simply saying: "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself." I think from that original founding legislation we now are on the advent of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Soil Conservation Service. Over the years the program has changed, but primarily the changes have come from that enabling legislation the States have passed through which they have modified and broadened their program to a larger scope dealing with urban type of activities, pollution abatement type of responsibilities and other forms that allowed the States to address specific issues of their particular area of interest. Back when again 1937 the enabling legislation or the founding legislation of the Soil Conservation Service hasn't changed drastically since until the RCA process was initiated in 1977. In the last 5 years we have taken a good hard look through local input in the RCA process. It represents, perhaps, the first major effort by Congress over the years to make a modification to the existing USDA program. I see this as an opportunity and I think my counterparts in various other States do also.

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[1] See p. 381 for the prepared statement of Mr. Vance.

In 1982, in December, President Reagan transmitted the RCA program to you, the Senate, and called for planning, implementing, and allocating resources for the soil and water conservation program for the next 5 years. In reaction to that, from the State's perspective, the resource conservation needs were identified by the various States and, in fact, before you I have a series of the States long-range programs that I compiled and had a chance to look through that include at this point States of Utah, Washington, Minnesota, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Ohio, and they're all representative of specific hometown, you might say, or home State interest that do diversify the program rather widely. I think again this is good reflection on what the program has allowed us to do to date.

If the Federal Government is willing to make a commitment to the funds and need from the expanded role through targeting and grants, we perceive that the RCA process has been worth the effort. If the process results in simply redirecting USDA's internal priorities and transferring responsibilities to State and local government, but without sufficient funds to deal with these responsibilities, then we perceive this as a dumping effort by Congress or USDA.

At present, after all the effort to gain the public input and gain an up-to-date inventory of our natural resources needs, which has diverted many hours away from getting conservation on the land at the local level, the President's budget for all conservation programs administered by USDA proposes a 30-percent reduction in funds compared to the 1983 year. We view this action with discouragement since it comes at a time when there's an excellent opportunity at hand to support a significant increase.

After a thorough review of the "National Program of Soil and Water Conservation," I perceive the report is one of a situation broken down into categories of objectives, redirection, strengthening the partnership and improving program management. Beyond this approach, it appears to be dealing more with symptoms than proposing a cure. There are no long-range goals established. There is no strategy for getting from where we are to where we want to be.

Recognizing these shortcomings, there are still many favorable results that did occur from the RCA process one of which I already held up. Each State has identified some specific objectives to be accomplished and established long-range programs on their own, many of which are 5 or 10 years in nature. In fact, the State of Iowa established a 20-year program called Iowa Soil Conservation 2000 and their program has been used by the legislature and I believe in conversation just recently with that State they informed me that their local budget for cost share to landowners in the State has gone up $2½ million biennial. They have initiated a new program of no interest loans to install conservation and they've increased the staff assisting soil and water districts by 21 new personnel at the State level, that is people assigned to the county districts to work as technicians.

In the State of Ohio it has already been reviewed. We have worked for and accomplished a $600,000 or about a 53-percent increase in our local match program to local districts. Now we, the State of Iowa, I believe Missouri has made similar increases and many others, feel a little bit misled in the fact that perhaps if we have now attempted to gain these additional funds which would be used as matching grant or eligible funds, if Congress fails to act or commit through this effort, then we feel that perhaps these funds will no longer be considered new funds at the time at which you appropriate and therefore will we be eligible to claim them as credit.

So these are issues that I think we want to bring to your attention today.

I might also respond that I wrote the Office of Management and Budget after talking with USDA Secretary Block and writing him a letter inquiring about the status of this matching grant funds and I would report at this point that just last week we received a letter back from the Office of Management and Budget and I feel we're in a catch 22 situation. We have at this point a set of criteria for State match—or State grant funds proposed by SCS that went to the Office of Management and Budget. If we don't know the criteria, we as a State cannot develop a program to gain those funds necessary. At the same time Office of Management and Budget says they will not allow that criteria to be published in the Federal Register, et cetera, without an appropriation. Congress appropriated funds through the House Agriculture Subcommittee this year which was taken out of the budget process early on. I believe it was a $17 million budget recommendation that was deleted though before it even got out of House. So Congress apparently is attempting to do something; the administration this year put nothing in the budget although 1 year ago put $10 million in. So we're in a very soft situation here in knowing what to do. But I do think that can provide us with tremendous incentive in the future if we can move forward.

Senator Jepsen. I always called that between a rock and a hard place.

Mr. Neal, you were the fourth person to testify this morning that mentioned the concern that neither the priority nor the proposed program refer to the retention of prime and unique farmland. My question to you is—that's true, we were concerned about that too—but the $64,000 question is: How do you protect prime farmland? Have you got some recommendations for Federal action?

Mr. **Neal**. It sees to me that there may be a means by which the potential incentives with regard to—possibly tax incentives which are near and dear to the heart of the landowner—that, of course, in Kentucky this does not relate on Federal level. In Kentucky we have an agricultural evaluation and for Federal and State estate tax purposes we have an agriculture evaluation.

But there are certain matters which, for example, there would be some availability to agricultural practices, tax incentives with regard to additional tax incentives, with regard to State and Federal and State tax. I think it has to be on an economic basis for it to be feasible. I don't think that you can, whether it be either that or the burden placed upon those parties that desire to develop those areas classified as prime farmland and that would involve coordination with State and Federal agencies for the utilization for its purposes. Some of finest land in the Commonwealth of Kentucky was utilized for the purpose of Camp Breckinridge in the First World War; some of best farmland in the Commonwealth. Mr. McElroy can testify to that because he farms part of it. But—you know, so really if Federal and State agencies allow, for example, the condemnation of it for projects, whether it's State or Federal purposes; all of those things.

Senator **Jepsen**. As a farmer, Mr. Kiracofe, farming what did you call it; the Black Swamp?

Do you have clear title to your land, do you own it and then your father owned it before you and your grandfather owned it before him? How do you feel—how do we keep you from turning your prime farmland over to a shopping center?

Mr. **Kiracofe**. First I don't have a clear title to it. All I have is the right to use it. The land belongs to posterity and all of the people that are yet to come.

I am not sure that either the Federal Government or the State legislature can do too much except on an encouraging basis. And any place where they are able to help I think they should. I think the Federal Government and State government never should be involved in subsidizing a water line or a road or anything that gets into what a local zoning group would consider their prime farmland. I thnk this is more of an educational process. We have got to keep putting in front of people the fact that this is a limited thing. We think we have problems with prime farmland leaving us now, but if we try to set up a law and regulation, I think we will have more problems that what we can handle. I think it's a matter of encouraging people and pointing out the need for it and recognizing that all of society ought to be—realize that our lifeblood comes from good land and that we will utilize the lessor land for things we want to put on them.

Senator **Jepsen**. Specifically you say, among other things, we don't want to provide any subsidies or any tax breaks or anything to make the interstate go across diagonally—across some good farmland?

Mr. **Kiracofe**. Well, within reason. I know you can't run an interstate way out of the way for us. But I've seen so many things happen on prime farmland that ought not to when there's other land just as good. It only would cost a little more to develop.

Senator JEPSEN. Mr. Vance, how would you protect prime farmland? What do you suggest that we do?

Mr. VANCE. Well, I think, first of all, it's a process of being able to properly define and identify where that land is. We do have a national cooperative soil survey and many of the States accelerated that program even further to get the basic soil resource information. Providing that information to land planning agencies, I guess I'll call them, local communities, through which proper decision can be made then is the next proper step. If you are in a community where there's nothing but prime agricultural farmland, some development must occur, but identifying at least where the the best areas of development with the least impact to agriculture obviously can and should occur. Then identifying those nonprime areas for developers, et cetera, again I find, from my own experience, that many times they say well, gee, we never thought of that. They don't look at the impact on agriculture. Again, as one of the other speakers said, as long as there's food on the shelf they really don't determine that as a problem yet.

Senator. JEPSEN. It's not easy when you start saying what specifically do we do and how far does a government at any level go in taking in this democracy of ours the prerogative or the governmental action to say you shall not and will not and cannot do such and such with your land?

Mr. NEAL. As I said, you need financial incentives. I think that's—I think it's either educational or incentive.

Senator JEPSEN. Even though you say that your title belongs—the land belongs to people on down the future generations, you still have some directing of it now.

Mr. KIRACOFE. I'm responsible for it now.

Senator JEPSEN. You would resent someone coming in and saying that you can't do something with it.

Mr. VANCE. Senator, one last comment I'd make and that is simply that I think there's a great need yet for good technical people to assist community oriented folks in guiding that local decision. Again, we have perhaps our greatest deficiency at this point is someone to be an advisor from a technical standpoint to local leaders in making these decisions. Again, a good Soil Conservation Service personnel can assist tremendously in that local decisiomaking process. In the absence of that, planners have already hired staff. But, again, they find the same funding problems and they deal with people who perhaps are looking for employment with a less soils, et cetera, background. So I would encourage perhaps that we again look at the funding issue as one of the prime problems in dealing with this whole area.

One of the speakers has mentioned that the current budget was 600 and some odd million dollars, $694 million for all of the soil conservation programs of USDA. Now, that sounds like a lot of money, but as we were coming down here this morning, the March 1982 issue of a magazine called Analog has a very interesting article in it. NASA spends a budget of $5 billion. That sounds huge compared to USDA's budget, but that, compared to Defense, Defense spends $5 billion every 2 weeks. Health and Human Services spends $5 million every 9 days. Americans spend $7.5 billion on pizza. Also $18 billion are spent on cigarettes and $40 billion spent on booze. So, what is our commitment to the soil conservation program in this country?

Senator **Huddleston**. Don't start meddling. [A burst of laughter.] You have suggested everybody stop drinking.

Mr. **Vance**. Well, as several people have said, it's a matter of priorities and I think that perhaps we have the opportunity through the RCA process with the best identified information we've ever had and you have that in your laps now in terms of report to Congress. It's a 5-year process. It has involved a tremendous segment of the society in terms of public input.

Senator **Huddleston**. Well, I think, you know, some progress has been made in preserving prime farmland. In Kentucky we have made provisions for assessing farmland at its farm value, rather than at its potential business development value, which I think has kept it for farming purposes. And, in our surface mine law, don't we, Tom, provide for a category of prime farmland which puts severe strains on whether it can be used. So, there is to that extent a precedent in effect of protecting farmland against other types of uses. But I know you get into very murky water when you begin to tell a person what he can do with his land; especially when he's sitting there with a big offer or a big opportunity to make more money than he has ever dreamed of making in his life and you say no you can't do it because that land has to stay for certain purposes.

Countywide zoning is another thing I know Kentucky has moved into rather gingerly. At least some counties have accepted that approach, which provides some protection.

Tom, let me ask for your assessment of the RAMP program in Kentucky. As I understand it, there are about 219 applications that have not been funded.

Mr. **Neal**. We're—this was discussed at a commission meeting not too long ago.

My understanding that we had that number of applications was a totaling. A request for $3.9 million and Kentucky received funding for about 307,000 dollars' worth of reclamation work on scattered areas. Some with, it appears quite candidly that someone in the office of surface mining someplace had gone along and picked out 10 or 12 of the lowest priced projects that were scattered as broadly as they could find them scattered over the Commonwealth in order to say well, at least we've—look what we've done for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. It was sort of like the fellow in a financial bind that pays his smallest creditors a nominal sum and he makes his money go a little bit further. My recollection and understanding is that some Kentucky miners and mining companies have something in excess of $100 million at the present time that is being held and, of course, we would prefer that the orginal grant concept be adhered to and that the funds be paid to the States and administered through the districts. I can certainly understand the current administration's problems with this budgetary deficit, but I can also understand that when you hold funds in escrow like that it shows up on a balance sheet in a favorable manner. But we do think that—and I am speaking more as an individual than I am in terms of chairman of the commission right now—but it seems to me that those funds ought to be utilized for the purposes for which they were intended and they ought to be returned to those areas from which they came.

Senator **Huddleston**. I wish to now ask you gentleman another question which relates to the watershed programs not getting the proposed funding for new construction starts. How important are the flood prevention and the small watershed programs to conservation in your areas?

Mr. **Vance**. I'll take a shot at that. Our resource inventory in the State of Ohio for example I think we have nine-tenths of—I'm not right. We have 700 plus communities that has a flooding problem. We have roughly 5 million of 12 million acres of cropland that has excessive wetness which all ties in to drainage, watershed, water management, accelerated flows, et cetera, but we do have an ongoing Public Law 566 projects a waiting list that's longer than we like to feel comfortable about and no funding potential in the future for some of those and, obviously, we want to encourage that. It's meant a lot to the State of Ohio and communities in developing along basically the water courses that were established and developed over the history of the State.

Mr. **Kiracofe**. I serve on the watershed board and we have an active project going on in the Glaze River project and it is doing a tremendous thing for the area it's draining. The farmers, all of them, are in back of it and support it and talk about what an improvement it's made. The next improvement isn't continual flooding, but it's the tile drainage and the drainage in the cities and roads. I'm disappointed if these funds do run out completely that we can't continue with that type of program.

Mr. **Neal**. It's certainly beneficial in the Commonwealth and, of course, the—as you are aware, Daviess County is about as flat as this table and everythig that comes from Breckinridge and Hancock Counties, every time, you know, they get a drizzle, we get a flood—I think it's very beneficial, particularly in the purchase area and some of the eastern areas in the Commonwealth.

Senator **Jepsen**. if I may, just one last question. Same one, again, and if you could answer it with as close to a yes or no as possible. In your opinion should the Federal Government require some sort of conservation practices in return for Federal assistance and other farm programs?

Mr. **Neal**. It comes to me first. I have mixed emotions about that. Senator, you can't ask a lawyer questions and expect him to answer it yes or no. It's just an impossibility. The—I think it's coming to that. I personally prefer a voluntary program. I think that if you want lasting effects from the program, it has to be voluntary and as some of these other parties have said, maybe it's one of education—it's just the same manner the protection of the prime farmland. I think it has to be a voluntary basis. There has to be an incentive on the part of the individual who owns the land and I don't think you can force compliance. It's like the 201 project.

Mr. **Kiracofe**. My answer would be yes. I don't believe a society through the Federal Government or the State legislature of my county commissioners ought to subsidize the destruction of the soil. I would point out that in our local districts we had a modified form of this very thing. We will not permit our technicians to work on a farm unless that man has an agreement with the district and an agreement with the inherent thought that he will carry out conservation practices on his land.

Mr. **Vance**. I will ask a question back. At what point is voluntary not good enough? I think that a few of the States and many counties have already began to try to say what is acceptable in our communuity in various actions and that, in essence, is mandatory, if you want to say it; but I think it sets a deterrent level up. It tells you what's acceptable. If you do not comply with what's acceptable, you're in trouble, whether you're speeding down the road or whether it's soil erosion. So I think there's a level at which we should establish at least what is an acceptable--when am I in trouble and when am I not. A lot of farmers would like to know that. But hard enforcement, I think a number of States, Iowa in particular, has looked at that and I think from my recollection over 700 cases of complaints have been turned in and dealt with and at this point not one has gone to complete hard enforcement. They were always dealt with in some fashion just short of incarceration or the full penalty aspect of the law.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you.

Senator **Huddleston**. Our next panel is: James Everett, county judge executive of Fulton County and James B. Allen, Jr., county judge executive of Clark County.

Senator **Jepsen**. Over here?

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES EVERETT, COUNTY JUDGE EXECUTIVE, FULTON COUNTY, KY.

Mr. **Everett**. Thank you. Honorable Senator Huddleston, Honorable Senator Jepsen, ladies and gentlemen. My name is James Everett, Fulton County judge executive. We welcome you to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and we're pleased to have the opportunity to present our views concerning the national conservation program and its effect in Fulton County and the eight county Jackson purchase area. The area I'm speaking of is located in extreme western Kentucky, adjacent to the Kentucky-Tennessee State line, some 300 miles from Louisville.

In a few moments I wish to discuss some of the strengths of the program; however, there are some weaknesses that I feel that needed to be pointed out at this point. We have already talked about one of them at great length and that is the protection of prime agricultural land. I do not have a solution to that. However, it was a priority of high concern in the republic response.

Also, grants to conservation agencies are included in the national conservation program. However, as of this date, no funds have been appropriated for these grants. If and when the grants do become a reality, these should be from so-called new moneys rather than taking from existing programs to fund them.

Even in targeting, the conservation program could have been greatly strengthened had funds for the targeting been from new moneys rather than taking these resources from the existing programs and put into this activity. The other areas have conservation problems the same as the so-called targeting areas in which I happen to live. To point out what resources can do for an area, I wish to discuss the following:

Since January of 1981, Fulton County, as a part of the eight county Jackson purchase area, has been involved in the targeting process. This concept, which evolved from the Resources Conservation Act of 1977 has provided extra financial and technical assistance to the county to solve soil erosion problems. In addition to targeting, Fulton County also has nationally funded ACP special water quality project. This is a part of the Reelfoot Lake rural clean water project.

Information provided from the U.S. Soil Conservation Service national resource inventory in 1982 shows us that Fulton County is composed of 130,241 acres of land and 13,799 acres of water—and I think that's considerably more today because of all of the rainfall and the Mississippi River not staying where it's supposed to. We also have about 95,000 acres or 73 percent of this land is cropland. Today, approximately 40,500 acres or 43 percent of the cropland is eroding at rates over 5 tons per acre per year, generating a total potential soil loss of 1.2 million tons annually. The total soil loss from all land uses in the county is approximately 1.7 million tons annually, which is three times the acceptable rate.

Soil Conservation Service is providing increased assistance to landowners of the Fulton County conservation district through farm conservation plans. This high quality planning and the application of conservation management systems includes: conservation tillage, strip cropping, contour farming, cropland conversion, terraces, diversions, grassed waterways, and grade stabilization structures, to name a few. The number of landowners receiving SCS assistance has increased from 190 in 1980 to 357 in 1982, while the number applying conservation measures to their land has increased from 107 in 1980 to 186 in 1982. This increase in technical assistance from SCS is well demonstrated with the planning and the application of terraces. As of 1978, no terraces had been applied by farmers for over a decade. Since then 11.6 miles have been applied to Fulton County farms in the last 2½ years. Target area funds and other special technical and financial assistance funds are the main reason for the increases.

Conservation planning with landowners, especially those under the provisions for long term agreements with ASCS cost sharing, has increased. SCS records reveal that planning increased from 2,551 acres in 1980 to a total of 23,769 acres in 1982. Also, according to SCS records, in 1979, only 10 LTA's were contracted on 994 acres. At the end of 1982 there were 60 LTA's concerning 5,793 acres. A combination of the regular ACP, special water quality, the RCWP, and the target area cost-share programs has increased financial assistance dollars from $376,587 in 1979 to $1,372,516 by 1982. SCS technical assistance staffing increased from two to three and a half people. Therefore, more conservationists combined with cost-share dollars has made the acceleration of this program possible.

A new progress record unveiled by SCS recently in Fulton County was an eye opener—in terms of the tons of soil saved. It revealed that the land benefited by conservation in 1980 on 11,084 acres resulted in 149,886 tons of soil saved. By 1982, 22,472 acres had been benefited with 288,395 tons of soil saved.

The overall targeting concept of placing people and funds in the areas of most need based on soil and water problems has obviously been a big success in Fulton County. It has been widely accepted by our district cooperators as can be seen through the progress in applying conservation on the ground. With budgetary restraints on both financial and technical assistance dollars, the accomplishments in Fulton County and the Jackson purchase area will support the concept.

Comparable progress for each of the other seven counties comprising the Jackson purchase targeted area may be briefly but substantially reflected in terms of tons of soil saved. It amounted to 737,804 tons in 1980. Tons of soil saved in 1981 jumped to 918,645 and in 1982 a staggering 1,215,697 tons for a cumulative amount of 2,134,342 tons saved since the beginning of the program. The resulting cost per ton of soil saved, expressed in both technical and financial assistance dollars, is comparable to the multiple progress shown. In 1980, it cost $1.23 per ton; in 1981, $1.60 per ton and in 1982, $1.05 per ton of soil saved.

We are proud of this progress, and, as county judge executive and a former conservation district supervisor, we feel that it has led to the successful enactment, last fall, of a millage tax to support our Fulton County conservation district program. Prior to this action, the district budget included $2,500 from the State aid program and $3,000 from an acreage tax for a total of $5,500 per year. Today, the district budget is $14,500. This illustrated that in Fulton County, the increased Federal support for conservation through the targeting concept has also undoubtedly helped lead to an increased local support of conservation programs.

Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Judge Everett. Judge Allen?

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES B. ALLEN, JR., COUNTY JUDGE EXECUTIVE, CLARK COUNTY, KY.

Mr. **Allen**. Thank you very much. It's an honor to be here today and I appreciate the opportunity to be able to comment on programs which I feel would help our area.

I represent Clark County which is located in central Kentucky. We are an agricultural county producing Burley tobacco, corn, soy beans, and forage crops. About 65 percent of our farmland is in permanent pasture, with beef cattle, hogs and dairy farming being the major livestock enterprises. The views I expressed today will be based upon the needs of my area as we make comparisons of the various programs. Regardless of the program we choose, whether it be one of the alternative programs, the preferred program, or final program, or better yet, a combination of all the programs, I feel that it's very important to set clear national priorities, and objectives that need to be met in addressing these priorities. I feel that the greatest resource our Nation has is its soil, and its protection from erosion as well as an abundant source of clean water must rank as the highest of all priorities.

As we consider the development of a new program, we must be careful to consider the present program that we now have, which is effective in many areas. We need to build upon and improve this program as we seek to solve our problems in the conservation of our soil and water. I feel that local conservation districts should be utilized in identifying local problems, and also in the administration of a conservation program. These districts are already organized and working as they daily assist our farmers in good conservation methods and practices. State soil and water conservation commissions already exist, and I see no need in the formation of another State coordinating board as it would simply be a duplication and add another layer of bureaucracy.

The concept of targeting a portion of USDA's available technical and financial systems funds to designated critical resource problem areas is a part of the program that I have a problem with. It doesn't seem right to me to take technical and financial assistance away from areas who have done a good job in developing a strong conservation program and send it to areas who have failed in the past. This would be penalizing those of us who have done a good job and rewarding those who haven't, and in a few years it could make us all target areas. I think that new money, as it becomes available, it could be funneled into the areas with critical problems, but I certainly don't think that we should cut any funding because we have been efficient, and we are doing a better job than other areas.

I feel that financial grants and pilot projects are useful too, in the education of our farmers as to the benefits of conservation farming, and I think they should be included in the new program as money becomes available. Those who receive low-interest Farmers Home Administration loans should be expected to apply conservation measures necessary to prevent the erosion of their soils. We must continue assistance to farmers and ranchers for planning and installing conservation systems. We must strengthen the existing partnership between landowners, local, State, and Federal governments. We must make sure that the conservation measures that we apply are cost efficient, and we must continually evaluate and analyze our conservation progress to make sure that we are meeting our objectives. When we are talking about a conservation program of this magnitude, we're talking about a tremendous amount of money. Choosing a funding plan, it seems that the high-bound programs have more to offer than the low-bound. Both high-bound programs include annual increases for inflation while the low-bound offers constant dollars for the final program and a yearly reduction in funding under the preferred program.

I can appreciate your problems with your budget, as I have just completed an annual budget for my county, and we face many of the same difficulties. We have a multitude of needs, and plenty of worthy projects to fund, but not enough money with which to do the job. It is then that we are forced to set priorities and take care of the most important things first. We are blessed with the most productive agricultural land in the world, but with it comes the responsibility to keep it that way. A nation that cannot feed itself is a nation that is in trouble. We must never allow ourselves to be put into a situation where we have to depend upon other nations for our food supply. With the present farm economy, our farmers are struggling to survive and are totally unable to carry out many of these conservation practices on their own. Government must help, as this is one race that we cannot afford to lose.

Thank you.

Senator **Huddleston**. Gentlemen, I think you both have made excellent statements. I know you are very much involved as leaders in the conservation effort of our State. I might also say, Mr. Chairman, that these two gentlemen represent two very fine Kentucky counties, both from an agriculture standpoint and otherwise, the two counties are somewhat different because of their locations.

Judge Allen is from the central part of the State, somewhat rolling bluegrass territory, and Judge Everett, is from the far western part of Kentucky, which is flat and has a lot of drainage problems. Both sections of the State are great farming areas. But, they have different problems and they need different kinds of conservation approaches.

Senator **Jepsen**. I don't have any particular question or comment. Mr. Everett, I want to make sure that I understood you correctly. I gathered from you statement that the targeting that you experienced in Fulton County increased local interest and increased local education and increased local participation?

Mr. **Everett**. Yes, sir.

Senator **Jepsen**. Therefore, from my quick figures you have about a 400-percent increase in money and at least that in activity, is that accurate?

Mr. **Everett**. Yes; absolutely.

Senator **Jepsen**. So where as money is everything is, can sure—whatever it is—in second place.

Mr. **Everett**. Well, we do feel like that any time that you put emphasis on a program, such as this has, that it increases the awareness and I think the emphasis that we've talked about on the problem areas, as well.

It causes people to take notice of what needs to be done and causes them to to get involved in that process.

Senator **Jepsen**. All right. One last question: Again, in your opinion, should the Federal Government require some sort of conservation practices in return for Federal assistance in the farm program?

Mr. **Allen**. I think it should if it's enforceable. As I mentioned earlier, your Farmers Home Administration loans, these programs were monitored and people know what the recipients of these loans are doing with their money and how they're farming.

That is one aspect where it could be enforced, but other areas, cross compliance, would be very hard to enforce. And I would think that mandatory programs certainly are not as good as incentive programs, but it may come to that.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Everett?

Mr. **Everett**. Maybe I feel a little bit stronger about this. I feel like that we're talking about public dollars and we're talking about a public trust and a public benefit. We're also talking about the preservation of an industry, America's largest for future use and future prosperity and I feel like that in that case if we are going to be spending public dollars for agricultural programs, then I think we ought to expect the best return for our dollars. And I think that we ought to expect conservation in all our programs that receive Federal assistance.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you.

Senator HUDDLESTON. At this time we'll recess for lunch and reconvene at 1:15.

AFTER RECESS

Senator HUDDLESTON. The subcommittee will please come to order and we will resume our hearing.

The first panel this afternoon is: David Beck, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation; and George Stiles representing the National Farmers Organization.

Gentlemen, you've followed the procedure today. Please submit a copy of your statements, if you haven't. I'd like the record to include them in their entirety.

I ask each of you to summarize your statement, starting with Mr. Beck.

STATEMENT OF DAVID S. BECK, DIRECTOR, COMMODITY ACTIVITIES, KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Mr. BECK. Thank you, Senator Huddleston. Kentucky Farm Bureau is the largest farm organization in Kentucky representing more than 221,661 family members of all Kentucky's 120 counties. We appreciate very much the opportunity to testify before this subcommittee and present our views on soil and water conservation.

Within the past few weeks, there have been many reports across the country of major problems brought about by unseasonally high rainfall. These extraordinary events cannot be predicted and the soil erosion they caused be totally prevented. However, some types of erosion problems can be anticipated and therefore to a large degree can be avoided. The recent heavy rainfall increases our awareness of the need for soil and water conservation and helped us realize that these problems need to be addressed even under normal circumstances.

Agricultural producers have a deep and abiding interest in the protection of the environment based on philosophical beliefs and practical self-interest. Valuable progress has been made in soil and water conservation because of research and educational programs. It is a generally accepted fact that soil and water conservation does not cost, but pays. However, we know that during difficult economic times for agriculture, progress is more dependent upon Government appropriations and the correlation of various agencies and the interest working on these problems together.

A great deal has been written and said about the proposal by the U.S. Department of Agriculture entitled "A National Program for Soil and Water Conservation." The most controversial point appears to be centered around the philosophy of "targeting" resources. In response to this issue the voting delegates at the 1982 annual meeting of the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation adopted a policy supporting the targeting concept—and I might divert from my comment just a minute to say that we support the targeting concept, recognizing that we would like to see additional funds. But when priorities have to be set, we support the targeting aspect of this program.

The policy of the voting delegates is as follows:

> There is a significant increase of crops being grown on marginal land resulting in excessive soil erosion. Therefore, we recommend that federal and state agencies dealing with soil and water resource conservation fully utilize available natural resource information to develop plans to address this problem and that the maximum technical assistance, cost-share assistance and education efforts be targeted to locally identify soil erosion problem areas. Efforts should be made to adopt practices to minimize soil erosion in these areas.

We understand that the original draft of USDA's program provided for evaluating incentives to encourage increased use of conservation measures, even though the final report contains no such language. Conservation measures benefit all of society and not just the agriculture producer. We recommend that consideration be given to incorporating incentives for participation, such as tax credits, low interest rates or whatever might be helpful in this area.

The final program report omits the need for national, State, and local coordinating boards. We support that omission because existing commissions and local conservation districts are already charged with this responsibility and there is no need for an additional layer of expensive bureaucracy. The voting delegates of the 1982 meeting addressed the issue of financing and structuring of soil and water conservation programs as follows:

> The financing of the total soil and water conservation program is a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and local governments. Therefore, we urge that the Federal, State, and local units of government provide adequate funds to maintain a sound program by the local conservation districts to be administered by local elected supervisors. We support the concept that at least one full-time soil conservation service technician be available in each county.
>
> We hold to the principle of the soil and water program being locally administered through conservation districts and governed by locally elected officials.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the timetables used in deciding whether the programs would be effective or not. We think this cycle should be expanded and be able to give additional time to determine whether or not these programs are effective or not.

We encourage funding for research into practices that improve soil and water conservation and recommend that adequate funding be provided for educational programs for the distribution of knowledge and improved techniques.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and offer these comments. And, Senator Huddleston, I know you are aware that the Farm Bureau policy is pretty broad and covers a lot of areas. I will be glad to address any more specific areas that you gentlemen would care to ask.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Thank you, Mr. Beck.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE STILES, NATIONAL FARMERS ORGANIZATION

Mr. STILES. Senator Huddleston and Senator Jepsen, my name is George Stiles and I represent the Kentucky National Farmers Organization as well as I'm a farmer in Nelson and Larue Counties.

The National Farmers Organization appreciates this opportunity to testify and comment on the national soil and water conservation program the President presented to Congress in December 1982.

National Farmers, in its position of working and promoting the interest of farmers, is vitally interested in a strong national soil and water conservation program as a basis for strong agriculture.

There are some significant changes made between the 1981 preferred program for national soil and water conservation and the 1982 final program report the President presented to Congress.

The National Farmers supports the long-term objective of both documents to develop a national program that will lead us toward a nondegradation of the Nation's soil and water resources.

The National Farmers agrees with the concept of targeting effects to areas of the country that have the worst soil erosion problems; but that needed funding of this areas must be new money. The ongoing conservation programs in nontargeted counties in Kentucky should not be sacrificed and these counties lose their assistance in order for the targeted area counties to accelerate their conservation effort. Otherwise, the counties and farmers who have been doing the best conservation job over the years will now be penalized.

We agree with the final report that new local, State, and national conserving boards are not needed to carry out a sound national soil and water program. These existing boards and committees in place that can do the job, such as the county ACP committees and the soil conservation district boards. In other words, we just don't need any more boards. That's being frank.

We in the National Farmers Organization agree that the preferred programs idea to use tax incentives as a way to encourage increased use of conservation programs. We feel that the items should be included in the final report.

We feel the retention of prime farmland part of the preferred program is a real need if our Nation is to continue to enjoy great wealth generated by its outstanding ability to produce food and fiber. Congress must be made aware and continually reminded of the fact that this ability to produce cannot continue if we are allowed the two great enemies of the land—soil erosion and indiscriminate agricultural land conversion—to take their toll. We feel the retention of prime farmland must be a real part of the national soil and water conservation program.

Last, we feel the final report's funding projections are unacceptable for the national soil and water program. The preferred program gives projections in the terms of constant 1979 dollars. While the final report projections are in the terms of the 1983 dollars. This was a very difficult process for us to follow, but it seems if we added up with the low-ebb leveling of funding which would be $745 million in normal 1983 dollars, then this would adjust out to $576 million for 1979 dollars. We submit that moving the program backward since the actual 1979 budget was some $865 million. So, we're going backward. We realize that some people are counting on the local and State governments to pick up the slack, but we simply do not believe this will happen in these times of economic stress.

The National Farmers believe that agriculture is one of the main strengths and defenses of our great Nation. As much though as the military or social programs, if indeed, we continue to allow our land to be lost to agriculture production by the forces of the aforementioned enemies, then surely we will lose this great strength in the future.

Thank you again for giving the National Farmers Organization the opportunity to testify at this important hearing.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Thank you. In checking with your respective membership, what is your impression as to the interest of the individual farmer in conservation practices now as compared say, to a few years ago? Is there more awareness, more desire to enter into some kind of a program?

Mr. BECK. Senator Huddleston, if I may respond first, I think there is. I can tell a difference from when I left the farm. The farmer is now more aware of the need for conservation practices. Research has brought about technology which has already been referred to today during this hearing where it can save, Senator Jepsen's reference to soil, oil, and toil. That's very important from an economic stance and we think that's the key. The conservation story is being told, Senator Huddleston, but there is a need for it to be told in more depth and we all recognize too that you get into the situation of putting out crops and Kentucky hasn't been isolated from the other States. We have had our economic problems here as well. And the farmer, when it comes down to laying tile in the field or having enough seed for his tobacco bed or canvas or whatever is necessary, he's going to produce that crop first. Many times, soil conservation is secondary. He may be aware of conservation needs but cost assistance and technology are necessary.

Farmers are more familiar with conservation practices but we need to do a lot more. We have come a long way, but there's still a lot of room for improvement.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Mr. Stiles, what is your experience.

Mr. STILES. I think right now finances on the farm are as bad as they were in the 1930's. And without money these conservation programs cannot happen. There's no question about it. There's no use asking a farmer to do something, protect his land—he wants to, no one knows, I like for my farm to be in good shape, like to leave it to my children and grandchildren; but if I don't have the money, I can't do it. Let's face it, I do well to stay there.

Back to the question this morning about the Senators that you have that are from the urban areas and how do we educate them and all of that. Well, frankly, we need some education here badly, because our country right now has the belief that we have got food running out of all of the big stores, everywhere; it's just going to be there for the rest of time, never will we run out again. And they just can't visualize that we're dropping back. Our production has hit the peak now. Corn production has begin to dwindle backwards and this, I firmly believe, we need financing and need money and need better income, bad.

Senator JEPSEN. Mr. Stiles, you said in one of your last statements that we need to protect our prime farmland. Would you elaborate on that? What was your suggestion for doing that?

Mr. STILES. Well, two or three people tried it this morning and I will try it again. I'll say the statement I said awhile ago I like to protect my prime land as much as anybody and I will go the last penny I've got, even go to my banker and borrow it to do it. But without a decent income I cannot protect it and with the program that we have now operating in this country I question whether we would even attempt to try to because you have so much absentee landlord. This man in the city—let's face it—he owns the land and he really don't know about it and we have the man out here that has written this land. How I'm going to get the last dollar I possibly can out of it because I'm broke already and why worry. We've got to have income and educate the people that do own this land; in my opinion.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Stiles, in your opinion, should the Federal Government require some sort of conservation practices in return for Federal assistance and farm programs?

Mr. **Stiles**. By all means. By all means.

Senator **Jepsen**. What about you, Mr. Beck?

Mr. **Beck**. I disagree, Senator Jepsen and I'll explain why.

The program referred to this morning in previous testimony, was set in place and one of its purposes was to set aside acreage to help solve over production of grain. Soil conservation wasn't the PIK program's primary purpose.

I'd rather see an approach where, if a farmer sets aside *x* number of acres he receives *x* number of bushels of grain in return. If he chooses to go with an incentive program in addition, that encourages improved soil conservation practices on his farm, he might receive a bonus, such as additional bushels of grain. The PIK program was set in motion because we were getting into a very serious situation. We were producing enough grain every 4 years to do us 5. If a man cannot make ends meet, if he can't pay his mortgage payment he's going to be forced into doing two things; trying to produce another crop, getting into a Government program for assistance or get out. What is probably going to happen, if you require him to spend additional money for conservation practices to qualify for a farm program at a time he has difficulty staying in farming he will not participate, therefore adding to a surplus commodity situation by producing another crop. I don't think it should be a requirement that you practice soil conservation to qualify for a surplus reducing Government farm program. I think, however, that farm programs can be helpful by providing additional incentives.

Mr. **Stiles**. Might I comment?

Senator **Huddleston**. Please.

Mr. **Stiles**. What makes a farmer or anybody work and produce is because of the lack of income. He has the fire on his back and he has to go. Your doctor don't want to work overtime. He's got a good salary. Let's look at labor. How many of them wanted to work overtime? I don't believe that the farmer will produce extra if he has a decent income, because most of us are kind of lazy anyway. Thank you.

Senator **Huddleston**. The next panel is David Gerrein, Madison County Conservation District; George Branham, chairman of Johnson County Conservation District; Thurman Pharis, chairman of the Hickman County Conservation District; Allen Franks, chairman of the Todd County Conservation District, and Roman Ubelhor, the vice president of North Central Indiana, RC&D Council.

Mr. Franks?

STATEMENT OF ALLEN FRANKS, CHAIRMAN, TODD COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Mr. **Franks**. Thank you. Senator Huddleston and Senator Jepsen and your staffs, I appreciate the privilege of being here. I am Allen Franks. I am the president of the Todd County Conservation District and the grain and pork producers.

Let's talk about money first. The proposed 1984 Federal budget includes a substantial cut in conservation funds in the face of a significant increase in the total budget and, of course, a horrendous projected deficit.

Billions have already been spent on conservation over the years and the job now is as big or bigger than it ever has been. Of course, hundreds and hundreds of billions have been spent on income transfer and welfare—and that job wasn't finished either.

I shudder to think where erosion control would be without the efforts of the Soil Conservation Service for the last 50 years.

Soil Conservation Service has already undergone personnel cuts. The proposed budget will necessitate more. It is a general law of economics that you don't get more of something by offering to pay less for it.

On the other side, targeting does make a lot of sense. In our area, soil erosion needs to be the No. 1 priority. Our wet spring in 1983, with up to 10 inches of rain in a week, has removed hundreds of thousands of tons of topsoil in our area.

Let me use a chart that we used with some 4-H children that visited our farms. In Kentucky, in 1977, on our row cropland we averaged almost 10 tons of soil loss per acre per year. In Todd County, in 1981, we had 145,000 acre of cropland or, on this basis, we lost 1.2 million tons of topsoil. In 7 inches, the plow layer, there's about a thousand tons of topsoil. So we can say that in Todd County we lost 1,200 acres of farmland last year and we probably lost that much again in May this year because that much soil went down the river.

I feel that many farmer do not fully realize the seriousness of our soil loss. It is an insidious loss—so gradual and so seemingly inconsequential—but its like a leak in a tank—eventually the tank is empty—the soil gone and like what was in the tank, it cannot be brought back.

Perhaps we, too, need a "Smokey Bear" for soil erosion—with some national advertising. One of the priorities of our conservation district is advertising and publicity. We still find, however, that personal contact, preferably 1 to 1, is the most effective way of getting farmers interested and committed to soil conservation.

Another problem that I feel needs to be addressed on the national level is getting the Government out of the erosion business.

First, when a farmer installs a sod waterway or a seeded terrace, that land is deducted from his crop base. This is not exactly an incentive for conservation measures.

Second, the farmer that plows up land that should be left in grass is rewarded with a larger grain base and the PIK program this year sort of proved that. We even had farmers plow marginal land this year that they figure could be used as set aside 2 years from now. Let's not make it more profitable to farm the Government than it is to farm the land.

Another problem that comes up from time to time is cost share. The money can run out at inopportune times and then the dollar amount per structure gets very low. Perhaps a method could be devised using investment credit and writeoffs so that in a good year more conservation systems could be installed and in a bad year fewer. I see nothing wrong with limiting cost sharing or tax incentives to erosion reducing practices. And perhaps the amount of tax incentive could be tied to the tons of soil loss as determined by SCS in the universal soil loss equation.

After 50 years of SCS soil conservation, why is the problem as great as ever?

First, we farm in a new era. We couldn't turn some of our 1980 rigs around in a 1940 field. The fence rows are gone—the fields are larger.

Second, we have specialized. Many farms have no use for grass or hay anymore. They don't have anything on the place that eats except the dog. We have specialized to reduce our investment and to try to earn a standard of living equal to our brother-in-law in town. We have also specialized because we can say grace over only so much. Our ability to manage is finite. We try to do a better job managing a narrower spectrum of our business.

Third, labor costs have gone up. Larger equipment lets us use less labor.

And, fourth, beef cattle have not been very profitable lately—and who needs grass when you don't have beef cattle.

Because agriculture has changed, our answers to erosion problems need to change. Answers come through research. To curtail research is to cut the taproot. I'm sure that this is true in weapons systems, cancer cures, as well as soil erosion.

Today we have a food surplus—and there is no comparison between that and a food shortage. But are we, perhaps in a few decades, going to need to grow a large portion of our fuel? Past soil erosion is irreversible. The future is what we're talking about.

In these couple of minutes we have talked about: The cuts in the Federal appropriation; targeting efforts where the problem is the most serious; publicizing the damage that long-term erosion does; the conflict between Federal programs and soil conservation; a method of cost sharing on erosion control systems based on tax credit rather than ASCS funding and the need for continued research to answer the problems of the eighties-type agriculture that we're now in.

Thank you.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Thank you, Mr. Franks.

STATEMENT OF DAVID GERREIN, SUPERVISOR, MADISON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Mr. GERREIN. I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for permitting me to give a statement regarding the national soil and water conservation program released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture last December.

I am Dave Gerrein, a farmer in Madison County, Ky. I am a supervisor with the Madison County Conservation District and; therefore, very interested in the national conservation program as it affects the operation of our district. I would like to reflect briefly how our district views the national program.

First of all, is the matter of targetting. The Madison County Conservation District is not in a targeted area. Last year in our national contest our district was selected as having the outstanding conservation program in the State of Kentucky. We are providing services not only to our farm people, but to the people in Richmond, Berea and other towns in the district. Over the next 5 years, if we lose up to 25 percent of our resources based on 5 percent increments each year, then I seriously doubt that we will have the strong conservation program we now have. We know about the so-called base program. We also wonder what this means for Madison County. I am one of seven supervisors on the board who give our time and efforts in developing good conservation programs and then providing policy and guidance as to how they are carried out. We feel we should have adequate resources to properly implement this program. Our district and I feel the districts outside the targeted areas are not necessarily against targeting. We do have strong reservations about pulling our resources for other areas. I guess what I'm saying is that if we are going to have targeting, and according to the figures it is successful, then personnel and financial resources should be additional appropriations rather than taking from strong conservation district programs such as ours for these other areas. Who knows, in a short time we could be a critical area ourself and in another sense we feel we are being penalized for doing a good job. The national conservation program provides for a cooperative effort between the Federal, State, and local level. Included in this provision for grants to conservation districts through conservation agencies—through State and conservation agencies. According to the RCA it should be funded in 1984 in the neighborhood of $30 million. My understanding is that the Department of Agriculture and the administration budget proposal has zero for this activity and, in fact, did not even request funds for grants to districts. This program, if funded, would certainly be a strong asset for our local conservation districts.

The area of the State I represent is limited in the amount of acres of prime and unique farmlands. In my own county we have substantial amounts of these lands. In the past few years I have seen the towns in my county, due to expansion, gobble up our best farmland. The national conservation program does not address this issue of the conversion of our best farmlands for other uses. I would say that in Kentucky and probably throughout the United States this is an issue that should have been addressed in the national conservation program. We are going to need this best land that is now put under asphalt and concrete to produce the food and fiber this Nation and a large part of the world will need in the future.

The national conservation program demonstrates two ways of funding the conservation program. I feel neither is adequate and most definitely the low-bound funding should be discarded. I further understand the proposed budget by the Department for conservation is considerably less than the low-bound funding, as outlined in the program. I would suggest that you, as representatives in Congress, both in the Senate and House, give serious consideration to funding our conservation programs adequately in order to insure a productive land resource base for the future.

The national conservation program does make some positive steps over the preferred program released in 1981. Thankfully, the Department omitted the State and local coordinating boards for, in essence, they would have been a duplication of our soil and water conservation commission and local conservation districts. One thing we do not need is another layer of bureaucary.

Another positive part of the national program is some pilot projects to test new ideas or methods for solving conservation problems. This gives us, as conservation districts, an opportunity to look at some problems and probably come up with projects as a pilot to solve these conservation problems.

In summary, our district feels the national conservation program has some positive concepts. Targeting for critical areas as long as it is with new funds, elimination of the State and local coordinating boards, and special projects to test new conservation ideas. The program also has many weak points such as inadequate funding, targeting when we rob other areas of resources, lack of funds for grants to conservation districts.

I would like to thank this committee for giving me the opportunity to present this statement regarding the national conservation program as it relates to the Madison County Conservation District and surrounding conservation districts.

There are a few other points that I would like to make that I have written here and one is:

Fifteen years ago I laid awake in a foxhole in Vietnam and I was wondering why we, the United States, as powerful as we were and are, were just a few steps ahead of our enemy it always seemed like. We just had the basic rifle and the basic ammunition, but I thought we were that much more powerful, but it didn't seem like we were. We just had enough to stay ahead of the enemy instead of using all of our resources we had.

Today, we're doing the same thing and I'm scared again. We're fighting for protection of farmlands and our water resources; but, we're still fighting the same way—just enough to stay ahead. And now you're talking about cutting us 25 percent over the next 5 years.

I think one of the biggest assets in our county, as far as fighting soil erosion, is good technical assistance. This provides good example and it provides a lot of leadership. And I can definitely attest to the fact that over the last 5 years we've had more people go—and particularly this year—to no till farming to minimum tillage and I think it's purely due to good technical assistance and good example.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF THURMAN PHARIS, CHAIRMAN, HICKMAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Mr. PHARIS. Senator Jepsen, Senator Huddleston, ladies and gentleman.[1]

I appreciate your presence and the opportunity to speak to you on the serious problem of erosion in our area.

I'm Thurman Pharis, farmer and chairman of the Hickman County Soil Conservation District.

My county is located in far western Kentucky. We have the Mississippi and Missouri west of us. One small county separates us from Tennessee. North of us is Illinois. I often make the statement that every State between Kentucky up to Minnesota wants to send their water and their soil down our way. If you were down there today, I think you would agree with me.

Most of the people outside of our State think of our State of Kentucky as being one of forest and coal mines and, of course, we do have some bluegrass; but, my interest today is an area down in extreme far western Kentucky, 1½ million of some of the best and most productive land that there is in the United States. We have soils that will produce up to 200 bushels of corn to the acre, 75 bushels of wheat and 60 bushels of soybeans. I'll admit that that's above average, but the potential is there.

We have one great big problem in this great area of ours—and that's soil erosion.

In Hickman County, we have over 160,000 acres of land and over 3,000 acres of water. And over 83,000 acres, or 52 percent, of that land is cropland. Today, over 61,000 acres, or 74 percent, are eroding at the rate of 5 tons per acre per year. That's a total soil loss of 1.8 million tons annually. All land uses contribute approximately 2 million tons of soil lost annually, four times the acceptable rate.

I'm often asked: Why do you farmers grow crops on land that you know is going to wash away?

I'll be the first one to admit that we have thousands of acres of land in western Kentucky that should be in hay and in pasture, with beef cattle, sheep, and dairy cattle. But you can't pay your debts with livestock and being a farmer or dairy farmer, I think you're going to agree with me, we certainly don't need any more dairy products.

The demand is for grain, and the farmers have met that demand.

In the 12-year period from 1968 to 1980, cropland has increased in the eight county purchase area from 366,000 acres to 880,000 acres. There's 60 percent of the total land in the purchase area that's in cropland. Soil losses are approaching 13½ million tons per year.

I'd like to relate a true story that happened to me this past winter. I know your fellows' time is too valuable to listen to stories, but I hope that you will agree that this one is worth telling.

We have a large island down in our county of Hickman County in western Kentucky. The waters of that mighty Mississippi and the waters that roll off of the western part of our State down in western Kentucky kind of confluence at that area and at this very moment the water is 20 feet over that island. It's unusual for it to be over that island—it's not unusual to be over at this time of the year, but it was unusual to be over it last December. As soon as it ran off last winter I went over squirrel hunting. I couldn't make a step, people, because the soil was built up on my shoes as I attempted to walk across that island. I put my gun over against the tree and sat down and cut out a little square out of that soil down to where the leaves had fallen in the November frost. At least an inch of good soil was in that little cut that I made. Now, fellows, I've read that RCA book of 163 pages and it's good. I've studied the facts and figures of the SCS and the ASCS and they're fine. But I don't think there's anything that will make such an impression or get your attention any quicker than to be on your knees on a 7,000 acre island and see some of the best soils of Iowa and Indiana and Illinois and Ohio and Kentucky taken from the topsoil and deposited among the cottonwoods and the willows where it will do absolutely no good. I hated to see that soil of the north there, but I really hate that good dark soil that you people have up in Iowa; but it really did hurt me to see the brown clay loam from western Kentucky mixed in with it.

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[1] See p. 383 for the prepared statement of Mr. Pharis.

Gentlemen, we have a need. The figures I quoted were prior and up to 1980. With the additional funds targeted for the western Kentucky area, we've accomplished a lot. Long range 5 year programs have been planned. Current projections, however, indicate that it will take about 8 to 10 more years before we cure at least 75 percent of the critical erosion problems that we face. We've built terraces, diversion ditches, waterways, grade stabilization structures, strip cropping, contour farming, residue management, and I'm sure that you know one of the greatest erosion control practices of all, no till farming, originated down in western Kentucky. I'm happy to report here today that in our county of Hickman almost 50 percent of row crops are planted no till. I'd like to comment, though, that that isn't our answer. It's a good tool, but we certainly need these other things.

We appreciate your help. I'd also like at this time to comment on an editorial or a commentary written in the Courier Journal[1] —I don't know how many of you people read it—written by Phil Norman. I'd like to say we appreciated his commentary. It not only showed the needs of western Kentucky, the area I'm trying to talk about, but also the needs of the Nation.

We ask for your continued support in our fight to keep our soil productive. I know it's difficult for you people to convince the people that they'll ever run out of food—it's been mentioned twice here today—when we have groceries from wall to wall in every grocery store in the United States. It's rather difficult to tell the people that they'll ever run out of food, but you can tell them that that they are going to run out of soil, that that's all we have, there isn't going to be any more. It's being used up—being taken out for commercial uses; but we're losing our topsoil. Each day the demands get a little bit greater on that soil.

I would also like you to tell them that there's a group that I happen to be a part of—a little over 3 percent that's producing the food for this whole Nation and we're producing it for about 14 percent of their dollar. That, compared with 59 percent of the people in India and 34 percent of the Soviet Union and 23 percent of our great competitor, the Japanese.

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[1] Retained in the committee files.

There's just one other point. And this one is really bothering me and that's the question of fertilizer. Each year we have to pour on more fertilizer to get the yields that we need. My question is: Where is our source? What's our price going to be? Is the supply endless?

I appreciate you listening.

I thank you.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE E. BRANHAM, MEMBER, KENTUCKY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION, AND CHAIRMAN, JOHNSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Mr. **Branham**. Senator Jepsen, Senator Huddleston, committee members and staff. I am George Branham, member from eastern Kentucky of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission. I wish to thank you for permitting me to give my views regarding the national soil and water program.

My interest and involvement in conservation work began 68 years ago when tagging along after my grandfather on his farm, observing his conservation practices in the early 19th century. The conservation problems in those days were similar to those today, the difference being that in the early 19th century not many people were affected by what the neighbors did as they are today. Also, each person had to foot the bill entirely himself and his interest more or less ended at his property line. Drainage systems were called blind ditches, ponds or small lakes were water holes and erosion was controlled by tree planting along the stream banks and hedges for wind breaks.

Today, conservation practices and or, lack of conservation practices, affects our whole country, not only for the present, but for years to come, not only ourselves, but our descendants.

Today, soil and water conservation is accepted as a must by the majority, and in order to get more conservation for the amount of tax dollars spent, the concept of placing conservation resources where the bigger problems exist has developed. This concept is called targeting and it is difficult not to agree with this philosophy.

However, this plan, targeting, as outlined has its shortcomings. It will no doubt place the greater conservation effort where the greater conservation problems exist, but does so at the expense of the rest of the Nation.

I will agree that the amount targeted for the conservation problem plagued areas is necessary, but what about the reduction of conservation effort in the untargeted areas that this plan will cost? The end result of conservation obtained will be the same, just different locations.

Since this amount of the budget is needed in the targeted areas, why not seek additional funds from outside sources to keep the untargeted areas at the present level.

Now for the methods of financing the targeted areas. Low-bound funding for USDA soil and water conservation programs will result in the difference of $550 million less than the high-bound funding over a 5-year period. With a population of 230 million people this would amount to a mere 50 cents per person per year, which is the cost of a soft drink at a fast food establishment.

A $1 per person per year set aside—and I use set aside figuratively, for appropriation—a $1 per year set aside for 5 years would double the entire budget for high-bound financing. This would give the targeted areas a windfall of approximately $550 million and at the same time keep the present soil and water conservation program at the present level.

Compare this set-aside plan with the $1 per person set-aside Election Campaign Fund on your 1040 U.S. individual income tax. Nobody resents that and you are talking about voluntary and involuntary; this is voluntary. You could do the same thing on a voluntary basis for soil conservation.

Soil and water conservation expenditures are an investment in the future of the United States of America.

Senator **Huddleston**. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF ROMAN UBELHOR, VICE PRESIDENT, NORTH CENTRAL INDIANA REGIONAL RC&D ASSOCIATION

Mr. **Ubelhor**. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Huddleston. Thank you very much for inviting me to express my views on the RCA process and soil and water conservation in general.

I am Roman Ubelhor, a farmer and builder from the Lincoln Hills RC&D area of southern Indiana. For many years I have been involved in soil and water conservation, promoting new and better uses for our natural resources and gathering information for reports such as this one.

First of all, I should say that I am greatly encouraged by Public Law 95-192, the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. I know of the many hours of dedicated work associated with this report, and the sincerity of the people who helped make it possible.

In general, I find this program acceptable, but in my opinion there are areas of inadequacies and even conflict of analysis. The report states that in the 1980's the farmer will be under pressure to meet the demands of domestic consumption and export needs, yet, as always, we have unmanagable surpluses and a costly PIK program designed to cut production. I find it very humiliating for our national leaders to impose trade restrictions and embargoes on other nations, then within a matter of weeks practically beg these same nations to buy our surplus at any price.

From my own personal standpoint, I have always had trouble justifying direct payments of Federal dollars to individual farmers under programs such as ACP. Often the individuals receiving assistance are absentee landlords or persons whose primary income is from sources other than farming. I think the picture is clear; the land investor is now being subsidized and his investment protected or even increased at the expense of the taxpayer. Perhaps changes in the eligibility rules could improve these programs.

The RCA report states that 52 percent of the erosion control measures studied were on lands eroding at less than 5 tons per acre and in most cases this hardly needs any protection at all, and 21 percent were on lands eroding at a rate of over 14 tons annually. These installed practices were estimated to have stopped only 1.5 percent of sheet and rill erosion.

Throughout the RCA report it seems apparent that the recognized problems of soil erosion lie with row cropping systems. Nowhere did I see an alternative to row crops. We must forget the glamour of being corn king or soybean king of our community and recognize that we are creating our own problems. Government can play a very strategic role in the development of new markets for proven erosion control crops now in existence.

As for Government programs, I would like to see a shift of emphasis toward the RC&D program. I have worked many years with this program, and I feel that I understand its objectives and its achievements quite well. The program utilizes the concept of using local volunteers analyzing community needs and addressing these needs under the guidance of an RC&D coordinator. The RC&D is a true example of targeting assistance to help with problem solving and I might add a very effective one at that.

The President has proposed the complete phase-out of the RC&D program, yet he has requested and received legislation allowing volunteer help for various other programs. The only difference that I can detect is that Government agencies select priorities rather than local people determining community needs.

Mr. Chairman, may I conclude by saying that in my opinion that people in high places probably know the solutions to soil and water conservation problems. Hearings, such as this one today, strengthen their beliefs and create the political harmony needed to address these issues for the welfare of this Nation, its resources, and its people.

Thank you very much.

Senator **Jepsen**. Let me ask one question on no till down in, I believe, western Kentucky.

What crops are being utilized in this fashion now?

Mr. **Pharis**. They have a rotation that we try to grow three crops in 2 years. Start out with corn which is—we try—you almost have to disc it up just a little bit to get all the residue that has built up over a 3-year period—disc that and put out your corn; get your corn off; put it in wheat. And, then the next year, no till the soybeans and the wheat. After you get the wheat off—it's a wonderful situation. We've just got one little problem and that's Johnson grass. We hope somebody will come up with a better solution to the problem.

Senator **Huddleston**. That's a problem for everyone.

Mr. **Pharis**. It's rather rough on our farm to combat with no till.

Senator **Jepsen**. What about the yields?

Mr. **Pharis**. We have yields that are just almost comparable to those of regular tillage. I'd like to comment just anyone can't do that no till. You've got to really be on the ball to do it. If I might just in a few minutes tell of an incidence. You have to put this chemical and this chemical and this chemical—in the right amount—and I was attempting the no till and I was called to the telephone by my wife. I went back and where did I get to? I was planting 10 acres at a time. I left out one little thing and there was a field with 10 acres right in the middle and it was bare. So I preach no till; I have for a long time and it's a wonderful tool. But you just—there's no room for error.

Senator HUDDLESTON. All of you made very good statements and we have some different viewpoints there.

Mr. Chairman, do you have any questions?

Senator JEPSEN. I thank everybody today in their statements. I thought this group was especially unique and original and encouraging and everyone had something different.

Allen Franks, your comments about not making a lot of progress. You know, yesterday it was pointed out by one of these people testifying he had—in fact, he had a copy of the 1938 yearbook and he read from that 1938 yearbook and word-for-word it was exactly the same thing as we're hearing and saying today. Forty-five years ago they made the same statements about soil conservation as they are today. So I think that we have—in RCA they are certainly long overdue and we're on the right track.

David, I appreciate your remarks about bringing full resources and your example in Vietnam. You mentioned also that the prime farmland was a key problem. May I have some suggestions of how we might handle that from you?

Mr. GERREIN. Well, I think it, you know, we had zoning in the city of Richmond and the city of Berea in Madison County; we don't have it in the county. And I think one of these days the Federal Government is going to tell our people in the county that you better have countywide zoning or you're not going to get any funds to fix your roads or do this or do that.

I think the answer today is our AG districts in the State of Kentucky. We started to have AG districts in the last couple of years, during our last year's convention. And people sign up—if there's adjoining land—if they want to sign up and have an AG district, it's a State law that they cannot come in there and subdivide this as long as there's like—well, a certain amount of acres set up that have to go together to form an AG district. I think this is one way to start it; you know, on a voluntary basis that way and see just how much interest you can get involved in it.

But you are going to have an incentive there also. Say if I wanted to belong to a AG district and two of my neighbors wanted to and we formed one of 800 acres, that you'd give me a little break on my Federal income tax year because I am part of an AG district to help protect prime farmland.

Senator JEPSEN. Yes, sir; Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Sir, if I might. In one survey that I read the State and Federal governments were the worst offenders in converting farmland through nonfarmland uses. This is probably a good place to start it, is the State and Federal government. And Senator Huddleston talked about a coal gassification plant in northern Kentucky, I believe, and prime farmland is involved there.

Senator HUDDLESTON. If you look at all of the Government acquisitions over a long period of time you will find that there's a great deal of truth to that. I don't see any reason why we can't require a survey or an indication of what the alternatives are. If they need a certain "*x*" number of acres for some kind of Government facility, whether it's an Army base or whatever, an effort should be made at least to require them to go in some direction other than toward prime farmland.

Senator **Jepsen**. Very quickly, if I may. You have heard the questions repeated before. In your opinion should the Federal Government require some sort of conservation practice in return for Federal assistance in the farm programs.

Would you briefly comment on that? I have asked for a yes or no before.

Mr. **Franks**. The participation in Government farm programs at this point is voluntary. I see no reason that the voluntary participation in Government farm programs couldn't be tied to a voluntary conservation effort which reduces soil loss to a given level.

I confused you, sir?

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes.

Mr. **Franks**. If we are going to have the gravy of the Government farm program, along with it goes the potatoes of making sure your farm has a minimum soil loss. How you would keep that minimum soil loss I think should be left to the farmer. There are several ways.

Did that help, sir?

Senator **Jepsen**. Your answer was no. You don't believe in mandatory?

Mr. **Franks**. I believe in cross compliance.

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes or no?

Mr. **Franks**. With the producer himself deciding how it would be done.

Senator **Jepsen**. How it would be done.

So, this is kind of a new idea, you go on the basis of so many—how would you decide it, so many allowable tons per acre?

Mr. **Franks**. If our soil loss on our farm would be 5 tons per acre or less or if we sowed it in grass, went to strip cropping, used terraces or no till; as long as we achieved that.

Senator **Jepsen**. As long as you achieved that goal.

Mr. **Franks** [continuing]. We would be eligible.

Senator **Jepsen**. David?

Mr. **Gerrein**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. All right. Thurman?

Mr. **Pharis**. My answer is yes. But first of all hope that we do through education incentive first. But then after that, yes, making it compulsory.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Branham?

Mr. **Branham**. Mine is no.

Senator **Jepsen**. All right. Roman?

Mr. **Ubelhor**. Yes; I think we must have compliance.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank all of you. I appreciate especially the comment; "We need a national Smokey the Bear program for conservation." That's a pretty good idea. We'll have to figure something out along that line. That's one of the big things we really need.

Thank you very much.

Senator **Huddleston**. The next panel: Ken Pigg, associate professor of sociology at the University of Kentucky; Wilbur Frye, associate professor of agronomy at the University of Kentucky; and

Jewell Graham, Logan County Conservation District, Lewisburg, Ky.

We'll start on the left again.

STATEMENT OF JEWELL GRAHAM, LOGAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Mr. **Graham**. Senators and representatives. We appreciate the fact that getting to come before you and presenting our thoughts. I was on a target. We believe there's areas in the United States that need extra money that the target program puts in but we do, like the rest of them, we do think that it should be extra money put in and not penalize the rest of the United States with the money that's going into it.

On the PIK deal we think that that has been a good way of getting some conservation work done on our land this year. I have taken my own county which is Logan County and we have gotten more requests for conservation districts for work than we have had for the last year or any year—the whole year up to this time. And actually they're putting some of the money in the PIK into conservation work and a lot of them are doing it on their own. They are spending their own money because I think that their land is idle and they got a good chance this year to do something with it and maybe they have been hoping for years to do and when there was cropping extension they were unable to do it.

I think you mentioned 0566. I happen to be chairman of the watershed commission that is the largest watershed in the State of Kentucky. We have 23 dams that have been built and one more to build. It has helped wonderfully. You talk about your clean water. It has helped clean up muddy rivers and we have extra conservation measures above these structures which have helped to control the silt and also we have control of the water and land below the structures. They are a lot more productive and produce a lot more than they originally did from the fact they flooded almost every year. So, I would like to see that funded to the extent that we could get something more done over the United States.

I appreciate you fellows taking the time out from your busy schedule and coming to Kentucky and this area and hearing the people here and finding out what the general public is thinking and we are glad that you have done it and thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you.

WILBUR FRYE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF AGRONOMY, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. **Frye**. Senator Huddleston and Senator Jepsen.

My name is Wilbur Frye. I'm in the Department of Agronomy at the University of Kentucky.

I want to thank you for the invitation to present this statement on the proposed national program for soil and water conservation.

As a soil scientist who specializes in soil management and conservation research in the Department of Agronomy at the University of Kentucky, my comments will be directed mainly toward some of the agronomic aspects of the program.

The USDA should be commended for the manner in which the program was developed. The agency solicited and received input from the public and interested professionals in such a manner that it was obviously sincerely interested in receiving their opinions. The USDA has demonstrated reasonable sensitivity to comments from the public by the changes that have been made in this final program proposal compared to earlier proposals. Evidence of this lies in the fact that the agency was willing to abandon several features of the preferred program because of lack of public support.

Not only has the USDA provided for public involvement in developing the program, the public will also be involved in implementation of the program. The decision was a wise one to use existing agencies and organizations at the State and local levels rather than establish a new organizational structure as previously proposed.

Participation in the program is to be mainly voluntary, which is essential to the acceptance and support at the local level. In view of the clamor for the expediency of regulations, adherence to a voluntary program is commendable. It is far too early to abandon hope that a vigorous educational and assistance program will produce the desired results in resource conservation.

The objectives listed in the program identify major long-term, nationwide conservation needs with which no one can disagree. However, organic waste management, listed as a national resource concern, perhaps should receive more attention in the program, due to the potential for severe environmental and soil and water resource degradation. Evidence of this is the identified seven critical sites in Kentucky and the dioxin site in Missouri as examples of the potential that organic waste has for degradating the environment and the soil.

As a society, we generate great amounts of organic wastes. If many of these materials were applied to soils or were to contaminate water, the results would be disastrous. Those organic wastes which are not particularly dangerous when applied to soils may create harmful conditions in the soil if applied excessively or may degrade water quality as pollutants. Once contaminated, both soil and ground water may remain contaminated for many years. Of course, the degree of hazard is determined by the nature of the contaminants.

Regarding the establishment of conservation priorities: Some conservation needs are national in scope and should be given high priority nationwide. Others may be critical only in certain areas of the country. The program objectives and priorities appear to be flexible enough to allow for this.

To reduce excessive soil erosion is undoubtedly placed correctly in highest priority. Although the twofold second priority—to conserve irrigation water and reduce flood damages—cannot be criticized, water quality, especially from the standpoint of hazardous contaminants, should have equal priority. An appropriate second priority might be water management, which would include irrigation efficiency, upstream flood control, and protection of water quality. Water quality has numerous implications in irrigation, soil erosion control, and domestic and recreational water uses.

In principle, targeting is one of the most sensible features of this program. It not only decreases the use of funds and personnel in areas where little conservation effort is needed, but it allows concentration of funds and effort where conservation needs are greatest.

However, there are several concerns regarding targeting and I share the concern that has already been expressed regarding funding.

Base-level assistance must be adequate to insure that basic conservation needs are met in areas not included as target areas. The danger that must be guarded against is that too much attention will be given to critical problem areas where the resource may have already been severely degraded while high quality resource areas are being allowed to deteriorate.

State and local governments must be committed to their conservation programs. A financial investment is probably the most effective means of insuring such a commitment. Local and State involvement, an essential feature of the program, is to be achieved in several important ways. Of particular importance is the provision for determining priorities, within the framework of the program's objectives, on the basis of defined local and State conservation needs.

Although I am basically opposed to mandatory participation, as in the case of certain Farmers Home Administration loan applicants, it is understandable that the USDA would want to protect its investment by protecting the resource in which it is helping to purchase.

From the standpoint of implementation, one of the most important aspects of the program is the major emphasis on conservation tillage and other cost effective conservation measures. Since tillage is the main cause of excessive soil erosion, minimum tillage should be used to decrease it. Conservation tillage systems, especially no tillage, have proven repeatedly that they are highly effective in controlling soil erosion. If used properly, no tillage is the most effective soil conservation practice that we have and it would seem unreasonable to think that it will not be promoted as the No. 1 soil erosion control measure.

Under suitable climate and soil conditions, conservation tillage can be more profitable than conventional tillage because fuel and labor costs are lower and yields are equal or greater. Therefore, incentive payments to adopt conservation tillage may seem to be a misuse of funds. However, in many cases conservation tillage is far superior to the practices now being used and supported. Furthermore, risks and uncertainty are likely to be higher for beginners in conservation tillage; and, where the need exists but the practice is not as well adapted, because of climate or soil conditions, incentive payments may be needed to prevent a decrease in income.

The program report does not clearly indicate how progress will be evaluated and success and failures determined. Apparently evaluation guidelines have not been established, which could be troublesome for local people attempting to evaluate and analyze their conservation progress.

The T value of the universal soil loss equation was indicated as the standard soil conservation yardstick in earlier forms of the program, but apparently it will not play an important role in the final program. From an agronomic standpoint, use of the T value to establish erosion control standards is a controversial issue. The major objection is due to its misuse.

A more suitable criterion of evaluation of soil conservation is an assessment at the local level of the amount of conservation practices with proven value applied to the land. Once conservation farming systems have been developed and proven practices applied, one would assume a certain level of effectiveness.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the program as outlined in the report. Thanks again for the invitation to participate.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, sir.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH E. PIGG, EXTENSION SOCIOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. PIGG. Good afternoon Senator Jepsen and Senator Huddleston.[1] It is a pleasure to be invited to this committee and present some testimony. I feel honored in having the opportunity to represent social sciences, let's say, in what is otherwise considered a very technical problem.

If I might, I would like to focus my remarks on that specific area and that is the nature of soil and water conservation as a social problem. I think that we have right here in this room today ample evidence of that problem's social nature and that only a few reflections on what's going on here today will serve to illustrate that.

I might start with the comment that was made this morning about the colleague of yours who feels that as long as there are supermarkets located around his county or his district, he needn't fear for the future of agriculture. You might point out to him the next time you see him—if he's still around—that the supply of food in most grocery stores amounts to 2 or 3 days. The supply of food in most American households will last less than a week. And if the food supply system in this country is disrupted to any great extent most of us would starve in the country. Despite the fact that some half the people are now producing something in backyard gardens, it's hardly sufficient to keep us going for very long, certainly in the dead of winter.

Food security is one of those issues that myself and several of my colleagues in our department have been struggling with recently. I am also involved heavily over the last 4 to 5 years in developing educational programs. It is very pleasant to me to sit here and listen to various testimonials to the efficacy of education programs. I'm afraid I'd view them somewhat more skeptically than some of the recipients of those programs. That in itself is a social process that varies in effectiveness widely.

It's interesting to me that when we think about the cross-compliance issue that testimony has been presented today by farmers and nonfarmers and with one exception, the Honorable Mr. Branham who was just here—and sat in this chair if I remember—farmers have overwhelmingly supported it. It is the agency personnel who have turf battles to engage in that do not support cross-compliance programs. There is an excellent article published just a couple of years ago with details of some of the reasons why various agency personnel within the Department itself have difficulty supporting cross-compliance issues. Otherwise I think most people here today would support it.

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[1] See p. 384 for the prepared statement of Mr. Pigg.

It's also interesting that one's justifications for failing—or not having much confidence in the targeting program deals with a perspective that says providing extra moneys to address the seriousness of the problem is somehow a penalty for having done a good job. Perhaps I'm unique, but I was brought up to recognize that public service involved the concept of "working yourself out of a job," and if the need no longer exists then certainly it wasn't necessary for you to be in that location doing the job that you're doing. Hopefully, before I reach a point that I retire, I can work myself out of a job and have everybody educated as to the importance of soil conservation. Since the odds are pretty small that that's going to happen, I confess that I expected to be a failure to a certain degree.

In another context you raised questions regarding explanations for the lack of support at the Federal level regarding conservation programs. I think if we examine the overall food policy in this country we recognize that cheap food and cheap soil go together. And only if we recognize what it costs the farmer and the American agribusiness system to produce the food that goes on the table so that they begin to get part of the 47 cents on the dollar that comes from other countries as opposed to the 14 cents in this country; perhaps we will get more soil conservation. Farmers are just likely to react that way. Farmers, I have found, are very interesting people and I enjoy working with them perhaps more than some of my own colleagues.

One of the things I find particularly interesting and I appreciate Dr. Frye's perspective on the use of the universal soil loss equation standard. Farmers place a great deal of faith in the status of technical personnel in their advice to them about what constitutes erosive practices or good conservation. They see very little problem with using T or some other output of the soil loss equation as a standard for determining whether or not they're doing a good job on their soils. It's only in the professional end of the business that the controversy over the use of the equation seems to be most prevalent. Perhaps that's a shortsightedness on the part of farmers, perhaps it's a recognition that they just would like to have guidelines to go by, guidelines which are obviously not forthcoming in this plan.

As one other illustration, the problem of soil conservation as a social process is most apparent in some of the elements of the plan, particularly those that deal with priority setting, targeting, and other such activities; these processes are social processes, they are not technical processes. They require action of groups at the local level as proposed, actions for which there is very little organizational experience. In the past these groups have done an outstanding job in doing what they've been asked to do. They've not been asked to target specific populations that have serious problems and to make determinations at the local level regarding who will participate and who will not. That I submit is likely to be an extremely thorny problem for local people as well as Federal and State people in trying to determine how we can best implement an effective program for soil and water conservation.

Thank you for your attention here and I again appreciate the invitation.

Senator HUDDLESTON. First, Jewell Graham, you say there are indications that some farmers in your area, at least, voluntarily on their own are engaging in good conservation practices and spending their own money. Do you think that's a direct result of the PIK program, the fact they're not having to spend that money on production costs?

Mr. GRAHAM. I really think it is. The fact that the land is out of production and gives them a chance to do something with it, definitely.

Senator HUDDLESTON. That could very well be a definite side benefit to the PIK program as it is established at the present time.

Mr. GRAHAM. In my county that's what they're doing.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Do you think the extension of that program to include, as someone suggested, a bonus incentive for conservation practices would also be a viable approach?

Mr. GRAHAM. I think that would be a good idea.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Assuming that we continue to have surpluses and we don't get to plant any crop this year, they may just stay the same as they are and may not be any to spread around in a year or two. That might be highly desirable, too.

I think Dr. Frye introduced an area at least some of us have to give a lot of thought to when we think about conservation, we usually are thinking about erosion and the physical disappearance of good topsoil and whatever, and your suggestion that contamination, chemical contamination, can have the same effect maybe even more devastating. Do you think what has been proposed addresses that problem adequately?

Mr. FRYE. What is being proposed, the program is flexible enough to include that if it's identified as a problem area. But it is not listed as a high priority specific objective of the program.

Senator HUDDLESTON. But you could have pretty sizable areas actually rendered useless as far as production is concerned through misuse of chemicals.

Mr. FRYE. The greatest danger, I think, is not through the misuse of agricultural chemicals that are manufactured for the purposes of applying to land but the application to the land of organic waste material from industry and from sewage treatment plants that might contain hazardous contaminants. Of course, as I indicated, some of these materials get into the soil and if they are extremely dangerous they may remain there for many years and actually render the soil useless or may render the water supply useless, depending on the nature of the material itself and the amount of contamination that has occurred.

Senator HUDDLESTON. I think Dr. Pigg suggested that we ought to approach conservation from a standpoint of food security. This certainly is a good approach. Even in the worst of times in this country relatively very few people will ever go to bed at night or get up in the morning worrying about whether or not there's going to be any food available. That occurs in many places in the world. It's a blessing we've had. But at the same time, as you point out, we use that supply up pretty fast if it's not replenished on a continuing basis. I think, looking at the long-range aspects of conservation, in terms of security and security of the Nation, it certainly is not too strenuous a term when applied to the situation.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Senator.

Now, Mr. Frye, minimum till and no till, I think, is something that is really on the move. And whereas it's not the total answer, it does answer a lot of things in these tough times that we have had the last couple of years.

You are talking about contamination, one of the things that is not known about this no till or minimum till is that the chemicals that are used stay where they are because they don't run off and contaminate when you have minimum till. There is a lot to be told about the story of desirability or feasibility of minimum, no till. But, can you do that with all types of soil? Should we apply for that old heavy, thick—can you do minimum till in that kind of soil?

Mr. **Frye**. There are a lot of cases where minimum tillage is not very well adapted. If it is a poorly drained soil and remains wet and cold until late in the spring, we know the temperature under no tillage is sometimes 4 to 6 degrees centigrade colder at this time of the year than under conventional tillage. That may delay planting and cause some reduction in yield. So, there is some difficulty. It's not applicable to all soils or all regions, because the farther north you go the less is it's application due to colder temperatures. The soil temperature is one of the biggest problems in the adaptation of no tillage to the Northern States.

Senator **Jepsen**. Has the University of Kentucky had any program or lectures on minimum or no till?

Mr. **Frye**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. When did you first start those?

Mr. **Frye**. The first one that I can remember we had that was of a regional nature was I believe 1972 or 1973. Some of the first—some of the first no tillage that was done in the United States was done in Kentucky. Kentucky is well recognized as one of the leading States in no tillage research and application. We're the leading State as far as the application of no tillage on farms. There's more no tillage in Kentucky than any other State. All surveys indicate that we have more no tillage on the land in total number of acres.

Senator **Jepsen**. Has the USDA ever contacted you about setting up a national educational seminar or forum with regard to minimum till or no till?

Mr. **Frye**. Yes; we are working with the Soil Conservation Service people on a very regular basis and setting up meetings and working with them on diseminating information.

I might say that the southeast region has a no tillage conference that is scheduled to be in Tennessee this summer, it rotates from State to State in the southeastern region and is scheduled to be in Tennessee in July. They are expecting 4,000 people to attend that conference.

Senator **Jepsen**. Have you found that the farm implement manufacturers are cooperative and interested in this also?

Mr. FRYE. Yes. Yes, they are. They are developing no tillage equipment as rapidly as they can, as rapidly as the technology will allow.

Senator JEPSEN. I thank you. In your opinion should the Federal Government require some sort of conservation practices in return for Federal assistance in their farm programs, sir?

Mr. GRAHAM. I think that they should in the case of PIK, I think it's well that they require them to do something with that land, not let it lay completely naked for erosion to—some type of control there.

Senator JEPSEN. Wilbur?

Mr. FRYE. I don't think there is a correct answer to that question of whether or not you ought to have mandatory or voluntary participation in the program.

My personal opinion is no on the mandatory participation. I think that a mandatory participation—I think that mandatory participation is unenforceable for one thing. And that once you have compulsory action it's an expedient process, but it's effective only as long as it's being enforced and once the enforcement is relaxed then you really haven't changed anybody's mind. You've changed their actions but you haven't changed their minds. I think—of course, being an educator, I prefer education.

Senator JEPSEN. Ken, you're an educator?

Mr. PIGG. I'm aware of the limitations of education so I would vote yes. I think the appropriate place for determining how the cross compliance is to work is at the local level. I agree with Mr. Franks who was up here earlier. I think if that's the kind of program we want to have then that's where it ought to be focused.

Senator JEPSEN. Anyone who has anything else?

Mr. GRAHAM. You were talking about the no tillage. In my section and on my farm, we have been no tilling since 1969. We have had no till AG planters since 1969 and no tills—not all of it, but part of it every year since 1969. We have had good luck. We have had a few instances where it wasn't its best, but we have had good luck overall.

Senator JEPSEN. Did you have something?

Mr. PIGG. Although it was not scientifically developed, conservation tillage has been around a long, long time. Mr. Branham's grandfather practiced it on his farm.

So I think for USDA and others to claim that this is a saviour is in effect rather shortsighted. As Wilbur points out, it is applicable and within certain kinds of constraints and those have to be followed.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Our final panel today is: Sam McElroy, member of the Kentucky Land Improvement Contractors Association; Hank Graddy, chairman of the Cumberland chapter of the Sierra Club; William Zimmerman, the president of the Bluegrass chapter, Soil Conservation Society of America; Gayle Lawson, vice chairperson of the Harlan County Rural Development Committee; Jim Shaw, reporter and editor of the Kentucky Young Farmers Newsletter; and Scott Wright, president of the Kentucky Future Farmers of America.

STATEMENT OF SAM McELROY, MEMBER, KENTUCKY LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

Mr. McElroy. I'm Sam McElroy. I represent the Kentucky chapter of LICA, which is Land Improvement Contractors of America. I am chairman of the legislative committee of that group and past president of LICA. I am also chairman of the Green River RC&D Council down in western Kentucky. I am past president of the Soil Conservation District and the State Appropriations Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers.

I want to first thank Senator Jepsen and his Subcommittee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry for holding this hearing in Kentucky. We are quite proud of that. I also want to thank Senator Huddleston for his work with soil conservation and farmers. I know I have worked with Senator Huddleston through the years and he's been very cooperative. I want to also thank him for the part he's played in the RCA process and the defenses that he's taken on agriculture problems in Kentucky and the country and his position on the Senate Agriculture Committee. I personally think Kentucky is real honored to have two outstanding Senators and people that—they know the needs of the people and we've gotten along fine together.

I'm pleased to be here today to testify. I have a written statement.[1] I have just a few things I would like to take up with reference to that.

Some of this—I'm going to try to keep from repeating what's already been repeated today. The first thing, I think, is to establish the needs and I think the need is erosion control and it's been stated it's probably worse here in Kentucky than it was in the West during the Dust Bowl days. I know you have had read to you today the severe problem in Kentucky, but I'm from down on the Ohio River down in around Union County, Henderson County, Daviess County, which are three of the top agriculture counties in the State, of course, along with several other counties. In Union County, we'll lose 16½ tons of topsoil per acre; Henderson County, 10.2 tons; and Daviess County, 12½ tons of soil.

You can see the severe problems that we have.

I think that farmers in my counties and probably the rest of the counties in Kentucky are experiencing very severe economic conditions which have been brought up here today. And these are due mainly to low prices, due to the high cost that these farmers are putting out for fertilizer, seeds, and chemicals, which are going up every year, and the income is staying about the same.

One of the most severe things that has happened out in our end of the country is on these elevator foreclosures. I know in these three counties that I've mentioned farmers were taken for about $3.3 million in the last 2 years on that. It has completely broke some farmers and there's others that are still trying to get along; but they're not going to be able to recover. I know I have written our Senators and our Congressmen in Kentucky, our delegation, and, of course, I've been highly in favor of a FDIC-type of approach to this; like banks have.

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[1] See p. 388 for the prepared statement of Mr. McElroy.

I know I'm a bank director and familiar with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and it doesn't cost the Federal Government money, but each bank pays so much premium but all depositors are covered and they're all protected in case of a failure of the bank. If two or three banks fail maybe the premiums might go up for a year or two until that is recovered.

I still think a thing such as this can easily be done with elevator foreclosures. I know in my time I have witnessed seven such closings in a 50-mile radius of my home and I know I have talked to David Beck very much who testified today for the Farm Bureau. They have a little different approach and nobody knows who is right; but I just think something needs to be done.

I'd like the approach that I propose and if others have better approaches, that's what we want; but I think whatever happens, something ought to be done because it's really rim-wrecking farmers throughout the United States on these elevator closings.

Getting back to erosion. I think farmers would be willing to establish practices and treat this land; but they need two things. The first thing they need, they need financial incentives and they need extra personnel to get the job done. And you might ask the question: How can we get these two things done? Of course, I think the financial incentive would be through the ASCS cost share fund, that would have to be added to. Soil Conservation Services would have to furnish the additional personnel. Of course, that's extra money too, to put additional personnel in each county.

The question was asked here today of why hasn't there been a better understanding about soil conservation and maybe a lack of support on the national level. I would have to answer that question, I think it's mainly political in that all groups have lobbying groups and I think soil conservation has kind of—I think we've drug our feet on that. I know I was at a NACD meeting here 3 or 4 years ago and somebody asked me, said, well how does soil conservation promote itself; what do you all have? And I said, we have a National Association of Soil Conservation Districts. They said, well how do they get that money? I said, well through dues from the conservation districts and that kind of stuff. And he sat there a minute and he said, well I tell you, said, you're not going to get very far.

So, I think we do need some more maybe political activity and I think conservation districts have maybe made a little mistake in the past by getting out there and working the farmers and maybe we should have been doing a little bit more promotion.

But I think that's the things we need; some financial incentive to make these farmers put these practices on the land and I think we need the personnel to get it done.

It looks like the erosion problem might be solved with these targeted areas; I'm not real convinced too much yet. As we all know we had a preferred program with targeting and then as was. I'll have to admit when it came out I was leaving it as it was because I thought the conservation district was doing a good job, they always needed some more personnel and so forth. But the targeted areas might be the answer. But I know one thing, you've got to get some money in the hands of the farmers to make this targeted area work because soil conservation is going to put extra personnel in each county they've got to have some financial incentives to make these farmers accept these practices because they're in bad financial shape and it's going to take some type of incentive and I think that's the type of incentive.

Now I think the time is perfect to get these practices installed on the land due to this PIK program because the land is idle; it is the perfect time to get these conservation practices established. I know I am in the drainage business, the tiling business, subsurface drainage, and I've already had several calls from farmers who have got land in this PIK program that wanted it drained this summer, some wet areas, while it's in the PIK program and they don't lose their crop that way.

I think this PIK program has greatly changed the attitude of farmers that they were very depressed but I think at least they can see a light at the end of the tunnel now with the PIK program.

I think that—what's really important to me is I think we need a second year of PIK next year in order to get rid of these surpluses and I think the farmers would go on their own in that we have been fence row to fence row farming and the farmers have realized that program didn't work and I think on their own they will seed this ground down and I think the world of it is not going to come out a crop and I think it's going to stay in grass and I think maybe there's a problem maybe with—at least help solve itself.

And there was another question asked today: Should there be mandatory controls? I personally think there should be some type. I think that as the population of any nation increases that you must have more regulations. Now, that's bad to say; but as a rule, I think, we've found from history that that proves out.

As an example of this, I would use some time that I spent in Europe after World War II. We were in the Army and I know as a rifle company commander I was given an area about the size of a Kentucky county and it had six towns in it and we had to readjust those people and get them back to farming. They were used to controls. They had some rules that if they cut down one tree, they would plant two back and if there was topsoil washed down the hillside, they had to carry it back up to the top. The mayors, they saw that that happened. I was surprised when I took over this area that they told me all the regulations that you was working under and we just kept the regulations going. In fact, some of the people I have seen those families—the average size farm of 12 acres at that time—and I've seen these people farm these hillsides and the topsoil washed down against these stone fences and in the wintertime they would get all the kids out there and they'd scoop that topsoil up and they would carry it back to the top of the hill. Now, we wouldn't do that because we still have surpluses; but the time will come, I think, when we would have to do that.

I think one other question; they brought up the problem of no till. I think that maybe the Department of Agriculture has come out, of course, with a strong policy on no till that it might be a cure-all. I don't think that will solve all our ills. I think still we have to put these conservation practices back on the land such as water waste, diversion ditches, parallel terraces, drainage systems and so forth. And I think that farmers are very much aware that something must be done. I've watched farmers over the years. It used to be they didn't seem to care, if they had surpluses, if the ground washed away, they just let it go. But I've heard more farmers themselves—up to 2 or 3 years ago all you heard from Soil Conservation Service and so forth, that the farmer is going to have to do something.

But I think, being a farmer myself, I've heard other farmers just say, well we've got to do something because the farms are washing away; and I think they have taken the bit in their mouth and I think they're going to do it themselves. But they do need some incentives and I think maybe this targeting area situation, financial incentives and personnel might be the answer.

We have one other problem in western Kentucky that I'd like just to discuss a minute and that's the western coal fields. We have 120,000 acres of abandoned mine land that needs to be treated. Reclaiming this land will not return an economic benefit for many years but it needs to be reclaimed. We have the method of doing it—of the money for abandoned mine program. I'm very concerned over the situation and the possibility of RAMP being phased out. You know this money went into the Government but then it was put back by the Department of the Interior a certain percent and a certain percent to the States and then 20 percent to the Soil Conservation Service.

I'd just like to say that I think Soil Conservation Service can do the job with less additional administrative personnel probably than any other agency. I think it fits right in with their type of work of soil conservation. I'd like to see the RAMP program expanded myself and in the hands of the Soil Conservation Service because I think they have the expertise to carry this abandoned mine program off.

The last thing I would like to bring up is the preservation of prime farmland. I think it should be done actually locally by local planning commissions. I'm quite a supporter of county planning and zoning and I think that people on the planning commissions know more about the preservation of prime agriculture land in their county than probably any other agency. And by the way that they have improved sewer line extensions and so forth in the areas that are not prime agriculture land, I think they can influence which direction the building is going to take place in their local area.

So I think that we definitely should preserve prime farmland and I really think it should be done maybe through our local planning commission.

So in conclusion I'd like just to read the last few paragraphs of my statement.

Soil conservation practices require time and money that western Kentucky farmers do not have.

Conservation treatments of our land will sustain productivity for future generations and possibly help with the current unemployment situation.

I enjoyed making this statement. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you.

Senator **Huddleston**. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HANK GRADDY, STATE CHAIRMAN, CUMBERLAND CHAPTER, SIERRA CLUB

Mr. **Grady**. Senator Jepsen, Senator Huddleston, and members of the subcommittee. My name is Hank Graddy. I am chairman of the Cumberland chapter of the Sierra Club.[1] I am also an attorney from Versailles, Ky. My family has farmed in Woodford County, Ky., for six generations. My father and my brother are farming there today.

Protection of farmland has been a bais of my environmental commitment since I've been a member of the Sierra Club. I am chairman of the Sierra Club Midwest Region Task Force for AG land preservation. I helped the Cumberland chapter select farmland preservation as our recommendation for a national Sierra Club priority. It was not the first priority of the national Sierra Club this January, but it was selected as one of the eight priorities for that organization to work on for the next 2 years.

In addition, my private practice as an attorney has regularly involved efforts to protect the agricultural land from competing uses. I participated in the RCA process and for that reason I am very happy to be invited to participate in the program today.

I have tendered a written statement and, therefore, I intend to take advantage of Senator Jepsen's invitation to speak extemporaneously.

I want to highlight three or four points that—some of them have been mentioned earlier today and are included in my written statement—that I simply want to make reference to. There are a couple of points that I want to expand on beyond just mentioning.

First, every speaker, I think, or almost every speaker has complained about the lack of funding for the RCA program. Speakers have noted that there was a high-bound and low-bound funding level and that this administration has proposed funding below the low-bound level. I wish to add my complaint. I think this reflects an administration's lack of willingness to make a real commitment to solve the serious problem of soil and water conservation.

I wish to speak in favor of the concept of targeting. I think an effort by the USDA to aim it's resources at the serious problems is long overdue. I think we've gone as far as we can in relying exclusively on a voluntary program. I don't think we should abandon the voluntary program; but I think it's time to add the next thing and that is the ability of the USDA and the intention of the USDA to go after serious erosion problems that will not come in and ask for matching funds.

Senator Huddleston in his opening statement made reference to a proposal, the shift of lead responsibility to the States as part of this program. And I interpreted his comment as criticism of that decision. I wish to echo that criticism. I think that now is not the time of the USDA to abandon lead in the fight against soil and water conservation.

Secretary Swigart, when asked the question about whether this State would be able to pick up the responsibility and lead, if I heard correctly, I think her answer was that she felt the State was not yet prepared to take on the new responsibility. It may well be that with time, on a case-by-case basis, the States can take over the lead responsibility as they have done or are trying to do in the areas of strip mining of coal and the primacy in the area of hazard and waste managements and primacy may well be the best sort of approach for soil and water conservation. But now is not the time for the USDA to propose to shift these responsibilities to the States. I see that approach as paper shuffling instead of action.

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[1] See p. 388 for the prepared statement of Mr. Graddy.

There is another point that was not in my written comment but other speakers have mentioned it. It's very important to me and I want to emphasize it. I think that this program does not address the need to pay particular attention to the preservation of prime farmlands. That is a glaring omission. It's something that the public—certainly from Kentucky—and I think the public nationally identified as something that should be a part of this process. It has been left out and it should not be left out.

If Senator Jepsen wants—asks to follow up on that a little bit I'll be glad to add some suggestions about how I think that program could be implemented either on a State or national level. I think Kentucky's agriculture district bill is an important first step but more remains to be done.

Now, again Senator Jepsen has asked very religiously—to the participants whether they favor mandatory controls or cross compliance and I want to speak to that. I want to because he might forget to ask me. I strongly favor cross compliance. I think that it is essential at this stage in the game. I am inclined to disagree with Professor Frye that it's not too late to give up hope on a voluntary approach. I think we have gone a long way. We have 50 years of experience with the voluntary approach, but I think it is essential if USDA is serious about tackling the problem of soil and water conservation; it is essential that that program have teeth, have muscle. I was afraid that I would be at the end of the program and the first person to speak in favor of cross compliance and I am relieved that a number of other speakers when asked spoke in favor of it. I am also a little bit relieved that Mr. McElroy spoke favorably of regulations, so that I won't be the first person to speak—to say something nice about regulations.

I think that the USDA can no longer afford to wait to deal with the problem of how you reach an operator who will not do what he is required to do. It's one thing to have incentives that the intelligent, properly spirited operator will respond to; but it's another thing to be able to—another part of the problem is to be able to deal with the person who is not going to respond to incentives. I think that it's appropriate that the USDA set standards and appropriate for the USDA to have the ability to sanction according to standards. The bottom line is that I think that the USDA must begin considering a national conservation practices act. These are two of—the cross compliance and conservation practices act are two of the options that are referenced in chapter 4 but intentionally not considered and I think that's wrong. I think we can no longer afford not to deal with those aspects if the USDA is serious.

Senator Jepsen has asked us, the speakers: Why don't the bureaucrats care about soil and water conservation? And a number of people have taken stabs at trying to answer it and I'm going to take my stab.

I think that the reason that soil and water conservation is not a priority that moves bureaucrats in Washington has to do with the dilution of the political clout that the agriculture sector has had. Up until the 1930's and 1940's the agricultural community and the rural representatives of the agricultural community could to some extent write their own programs and it was not necessarily for the agricultural community to build coalitions with suburban and urban representatives. As a result the agricultural community has had a tendency to talk to itself. That day has passed and agricultural representatives are no longer able to write their program all by themselves. They must, in my opinion, build coalitions with urban and surburban representatives. And as I looked over the agenda for today's program it occurred to me that as a representative of the Sierra Club, I am the only representative of an organization that you would call an urban or suburban organization. Therefore, it is with particular pleasure that I am able to join this program. I don't consider myself urban or suburban, unless Midway, Ky., is considered urban-suburban. Midway, Ky., is a community of 800; midway between Frankfort and Lexington.

Senator **Huddleston**. A great community. It's an urban area. [A burst of laughter.]

Mr. **Graddy** [continuing]. Anyway, whether I am urban or suburban, I represent an organization that is traditionally considered an urban organization and I am proud to report that that organization is now committed to some extent to joing the fight to preserve soil quantity, soil quality, and water quality.

You may ask why would the Sierra Club, which has traditionally been concerned about wilderness and parks, and wildlife, now care about farmland. The answer is very simple: The Sierra Club, I think properly recognizes that everything is connected. As cities decay and as people leave the cities and spread out in the suburbs across prime farmland, the farmers are required to leave level land and well-drained land and go seek land to try to grow their crops. They try to farm on land that is less capable of handling what they're trying to do. They increase the risk of erosion as they hurry the day they have to go even further into more fragile lands to grow their crops.

The Sierra Club wishes to participate in reversing that decay, to try to create cities that help themselves contain their population; with prime farmland protected for the use of growing crops on a sustaining basis and with the designation of fragile, sensitive areas for wilderness, for timber if that's an appropriate use, for national forests which is a multiple-use commitment and for national parks.

Again, on behalf of the Sierra Club, it is a privilege for me to be here this afternoon. I wish to express my personal strong support and that organization's support for your efforts and for the efforts of the agricultural community to try to solve this problem.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM H. ZIMMERMAN, PRESIDENT, BLUEGRASS CHAPTER, SOIL CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. We really appreciate this field hearing.

My name is Bill Zimmerman from Frankfort, Ky.[1]

Today I'd like to represent the Blugrass chapter of the Soil Conservation Society of America.

We have 120 professional members in the eastern half of Kentucky although the national chapter has 12,000 members across the country. We all believe in about the same thing. Our national motto is "to advance the art and science of good land use." I am the current president of the Bluegrass chapter and I have been an active member in the Soil Conservation Society of America for over 30 years. I have had career experience as a soil scientist, agriculture economist, agronomist and now resource planner.

In this statement, I would like to emphasize just two important facts concerning the national soil and water conservation program as it is related to Kentucky.

The first is the scope of the problem as documented and I think you've seen it in this Kentucky soil and water conservation program. I hope that your staff is using it—I hope yours, Senator Jepsen, from Iowa and other places are using theirs. To me everything that has been discussed today is summarized in this report; good, balanced basic data.

The second thing I would like to do is to stress, as has been before, the increased need for Federal financial and technical assistance to landowners. They have already been having difficulties in controlling this increased erosion; and also the reduced water quality and supply, the increased flooding and the overall natural resource degradation. Last year, as pointed out in this report, the estimated soil erosion from all sources in Kentucky was 141 million tons. Sam (McElroy), that would take a long time to take buckets and get that back on the ground; 141 million tons in 1 year. One-third of this erosion was from cultivated cropland in Kentucky; 405,000 acres had a soil loss of over 25 tons per acre and, gentlemen, that's five times the acceptable rate.

Senator JEPSEN. Excuse me. How many acres is that again?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. 405,000 acres had over a 25-ton soil loss. This is from the report.

This excessive amount of soil erosion was mainly due, in the last 10 years, to the doubling of corn and soybeans. We're now 3.3 million acres in Kentucky—we're getting to be about like a Corn Belt State. Due to the high cost of crop production and low returns to the farmers, they need more financial and technical assistance in order to install conservation cropping systems on their land.

We support this concept of identifying priority conservation problems—that is targeting—in specific geographic areas such as the western third of Kentucky has a cropland erosion problem. However, this needs to be new or additional appropriations and not taken from the very successful and needed conservation activities and programs in the nontargeted areas.

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[1] See p. 390 for the prepared statement of Mr. Zimmerman.

We believe there should be more involvement by local conservation districts and State resource agencies, thus forming a stronger Federal-State-local partnership. Again, this would require new money for grants to States and districts ongoing conservation appropriations.

We feel that current, documented State soil and water conservation programs such as this one, local conservation district long-range plans—there's a dozen of these for the different conservation districts in Kentucky; we've got twenty or thirty more involved—should be the dominant basis for setting priorities and making decisions on conservation needs and on determining technical and financial assistance to these people in the State.

I appreciate this opportunity for making this statement. Thank you.

Mr. JEPSEN. Thank you.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Ms. Lawson.

STATEMENT OF GAYLE LAWSON, VICE CHAIRPERSON, HARLAN COUNTY RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Ms. LAWSON. I'm very happy to be here this afternoon and I feel like a fish out of water because I'm not a professional in the soil conservation service, I'm not a professional in law, I'm not a property owner in the sense that I own farmland—I have a little strip of scrub pretty land about as wide as this table and about as wide as the room; but I have some problems that I would like to address with this committee. It's a very great pleasure to me to have the opportunity to speak before Senator Jepsen and Senator Huddleston, our own Kentucky Senator.

I have studied the preferred program in its draft form; I spent 4 days, gentlemen, trying to digest this program.[1] I've spent about 2 days on the final draft of the program and I have some serious problems with both of them. I think the final draft includes some fantastic data; but the conclusions that were drawn from that data seem to me as far out as you can get. Just about as far out as you can get. And I'm going to quote from the preferred program a statement or two that I came across in the first perusal of this information.

It is on "10 percent of cropland that most cropland erosion occurs; some at the rate of 100 tons per acre annually" . . . "Controlling erosion on the most severely eroding 10 percent of the cropland would reduce the total cropland erosion by 54 percent and excessive erosion on cropland by 89 percent."

Now, I'm from coal mining country. I'm from the southeastern part of Kentucky just as far south and east as you can get before you fall over into Virginia or Tennessee; and I would say that I am 100 percent for mandatory control. And I'm going to tell you why: If the farmers don't get their act together and do it, it will be done for them.

Here's another statement from the draft report:

> Participation in these programs has been voluntary, relying on commitment to a conservation ethic and incentives. It has resulted in major achievements in protecting the resource base. However, traditional programs and approaches appear to

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[1] See p. 391 for a letter from Ms. Lawson to Secretary Block, dated January 12, 1982.

have reached the limits of their effectiveness in bringing about full achievement of soil and water conservation objectives.

Now that's from the draft report. And there is ample evidence in both of these reports to show that voluntary compliance is not succeeding. Isn't it reasonable to assume that after these many years of free technical assistance offered to landowners along with generous cost-sharing plans made available to them, that voluntary compliance is not getting the job done when this 10 percent is causing most of the problem?

This is the same thing that happened in the coal industry. It was only about 10 percent of the people that created the problems where surface mining is concerned. It was only 10 percent or less who were wildcatters. It's the same story in production of oil, it's the same story in various areas of production in this country, it is the few that forces mandatory control upon many. And I'm saying to the farm industry if you don't get your act together, it's coming. Wouldn't you say that's true? It's on its way. [A burst of laughter.]

The people of America have subsidized agriculture since the first act for cost sharing was passed and we have expected results. And yet, in 1971, erosion in this country according to the final draft report was worse than it has ever been. I have heard people sit in this room today and say, with no reservation, that people have plowed up marginal and fragile lands and put them into row crop production. We, in eastern Kentucky, are begging you to not give all of the funds to those who have caused the most serious problems. We need forest land protection.

The priorities set for this program really stick in my craw. The fact that the majority of the money it appears will go to priority No. 1—and I have some serious questions about how much the money is going to be divided—and that flood control being the second priority is linked with crop production—if I read the report correctly—seems to negate the fact that people who wrote the report don't understand where floods really begin. Floods begin on the headwaters of all the streams in America. And I live on the headwaters that come together in the town of Harlan and become the Cumberland River and the sediment load of the Cumberland River comes out of the creeks and the hollows and off the hills all the way to the Ohio River where it ends. So we have to look at the headwaters, at the other reaches of the streams with some of the measures of conservation.

We have a splendid young man in our county who has recently come there as our soil conservation agent and he has helped to design a program through the resource conservation and development program—I'm an associate member of the RC&D council—and what is going to happen to the work of these programs, to the education of our youth, to the no till educational seminars that were mentioned here today; what's going to happen to all of this work if all of the funds are devoted to those people who have caused the magnitude of problems that we are looking at?

It seems that we're really talking about the flag, motherhood, and apple pie when we look at all these things. From the time that I first began studying this revised draft, I had some doubts about the adequacies of the preferred program.

Now, I'm going to say something that will be very negative and I'm sure is of short duration, actually; but it seems strange to me that in the final report on page 5 the major need for this program according to the writer of this article says that it is due to the increased world dependence upon the agricultural commodities from the United States. Well, what in the world are we doing with this backlog of surpluses that we are having to give away through the incentive programs, payment-in-kind incentive program, why are we having to dispose of the commodities that are backlogged and being stored and costing the Government millions of dollars because of overproduction if this is the reason we need this program? Why can't we dispose of this in the world market? You know, these things don't seem logical to us. The adequacy of the program brings many things into question. We need, for instance, to look at how the moneys will be divided. Will it come to the States in a block grant and, if so, who will set the priorities? Will the Governor set them? Will the soil conservation districts be involved in deciding how the money will be spent?

We have some very special problems in our area; one of which I would like to see addressed through the present soil conservation program and, that is, timberland—timber stand improvement. I heard this morning—as I came down here—on the radio, listening in the car, that our county has the highest fire record, fire destruction of timberland of any county in this State, this spring. Fire prevention is the No. 1 need according to one of the large lumber companies in our county. Another large lumber company says that the use of cull trees is a No. 1 priority with them. We're looking at a county that has two resources, no agricultural land to speak of, just a few little garden spots; but we have a massive 92 percent of our county covered with timber and the rest of the economy rests upon the bases of coal, but the timber stand can't be properly improved because of no market for cull timber. Since both of you gentlemen are members and relate to the forest problems of the Nation I hope that my statement will be considered in that we need to develop through the Soil Conservation Service or through some other commission a market for the cull timber in the Appalachian area. If we could get it out of the way then the forest production would be doubled or tripled.

STATEMENT OF JIM SHAW REPRESENTING THE KENTUCKY YOUNG FARMER ASSOCIATION

Mr. SHAW. I'm Jim Shaw. I'm a full-time working and active farmer. That means that when something gets done, I do it; I don't tell somebody to go do it. I've got 170 acres in the PIK program and I've still got 100 acres that I'm putting in corn and beans and I think I contributed about 70 acres of that 405,000 that he was talking about awhile ago. I'm one of the ones that's on the other end of the spectrum here. I'm abusing the land, you might say; but then I've got a special problem that she doesn't—you know, Ms. Lawson didn't really understand down our way.

I'm a young farmer that just got started about 7 or 8 years ago. There's not a great amount of land available when you get started as a young farmer and I had to take what was there. A lot of it is marginal but it's all I could get and that's why I'm farming it.

To get on—that's kind of off-context of the way I've got this statement fixed out here.

I represent Kentucky Young Farmer Association.[1] I'm the State reporter and the editor of the newsletter. I'm more or less here today because I'm the closest one to the area and we don't really have a stand as an association as such. We're a continuing education association here in the State. We feel like secondary and high school AG education is not enough. When you get out of high school and you want to farm there's a lot of areas that you're still not fully developed in. We come on and we have educational programs to try and improve our knowledge in agriculture. That's why I'm here today; I'm representing the association.

I don't really have much, you know—I'm ill-prepared. I've been farming the last couple of weeks; we have been wet down here. I haven't had time to study the report like Ms. Lawson. Perhaps when the questions start I can answer questions better than I can make a prepared statement so I'll let Scott go on then.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Thank you, Jim. I guess it is probably very appropriate that our last witness today, Roger, is a fellow who has greater interest in what direction we take than anybody that has appeared yet because Scott Wright represents the Future Farmers of Kentucky. Whether or not there are going to be any future or not may be dependent on how well we take care of what we have now. Scott?

STATEMENT OF SCOTT WRIGHT, STATE PRESIDENT, KENTUCKY FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA ASSOCIATION

Mr. WRIGHT. Thank you Senator Huddleston, Senator Jepsen; and indeed that is true.

I think so often our future is determined by the actions that our Congress takes and those of our people; of how our grandfathers and fathers treat the land. I think today, more than anything, it is our realization that whether or not my generation will have any land to farm and whether or not my children's generation will have any land to farm depends on how we act today and how well we take care of the soil and are stewards of the soil.

Senator Huddleston, I am pleased to announce that the Future Farmers of America strongly believe in American agriculture and in the future of American agriculture. We therefore consider the preservation of our prime agricultural land the top national priority. You know, American agriculture serves our country in two very important facets. First of all the strength of our agricultural industry lies in our productive farmland. To allow our productive farmland to be destroyed would be a serious mistake. Many Americans are employed in the industry of agriculture and destroying prime farmland, the strength of agriculture, would destroy vital jobs.

Second, in today's worldwide economy, America can outproduce any other nation in food and fiber and deliver it at the lowest cost.

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[1] See p. 395 for the prepared statement of Mr. Shaw.

Thus, we in America enjoy rich diets because of gain in agriculture. The further deterioration of our farmland would threaten our capacity to continue to feed our people, thus endangering our national security. So I think America is indeed blessed to have rich farmland. We must take steps to conserve it.

I recommend that an aggressive program be developed to counter the recent erosion trends and that legislation be drafted to protect our prime farmland from the urban crawl existing today. Although the percentage of farmland lost annually to urbanization is minute, the long-term effects on this trend could be disastrous. We need to manage this trend today, before it evolves into a serious problem.

The Resource Conservation Act should also encourage a more effective use of water for agricultural production. The RCA should target State laws on water rights that need revision and should encourage the formation of institutions to regualte and distribute the use of water, especially in cases of serious shortages. Agricultural needs should be placed as a top priority in any rationing of water and the RCA should clearly state that.

The USDA should work in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency to insure that our water systems are as clean and healthy as possible. We Americans deserve clean water systems and the U.S. Department of Agriculture should work alongside the EPA in enforcing pollution standards.

To reduce soil erosion, I suggest that the Resource Conservation Act direct local conservation districts to classify certain segments of each district as unfit for certain types of agricultural production. For instance, all of the class 3 farmland in a certain district would be classified as unfit for continuous row cropping in line with all of the conservation standards printed by the University of Kentucky this year. To strengthen the power of these local districts, the USDA could deny any Government assistance to any farmer not following the local distict's conservation plan. The USDA should further require all recipients of FmHA loans to follow conservation plans as outlined for a particular district.

The RCA should continue targeting resources into areas with critical needs, but the RCA should also maintain a firm base program in all areas. Resource conservation should occur in all areas of our country and the only way to insure this is to maintain a base program in every district.

The USDA should undertake a program to make the public more aware of the dangers of soil conservation through the mass media and public education. I am pleased to announce that soil conservation is an integral part of vocational agriculture education in our Kentucky schools but that's the only curriculum that it is an integral part of. We need to educate our citizens on what the problems are and we need to reach them and today's mass media would be a fine facet or a fine avenue of doing that. Our citizens need to be aware of the problems they are facing so that they can adequately deal with them.

The Future Farmers of America strongly believe in the American farm family and I encourage the USDA and our Congress to analyze the role of family farms in soil conservation. Family farmers have typically been good stewards of the soil and the USDA should encourage the role of the family farm in soil conservation.

Any Federal program has the greatest probability of success when local governments are involved in a partnership with State and Federal governments. So, I urge the USDA to increase the participation of local governments in soil conservation by conducting meetings, workshops, and seminars at the local level.

The 1977 RCA encouraged local governments to take more initiative in conservation projects by providing matching funding. But I question the ability of rural areas and especially today in the economic problems that we are facing in rural America, to raise sufficient revenue required for such a matching grant. I suggest that the USDA provide direct grants to encourage local initiatives, thus facilitating local projects.

USDA programs should be amended to be congruent with today's conservation goals. Any program found in conflict should be scrutinized carefully.

Any USDA pilot project in soil conservation should be carefully analyzed and all data pertaining to the efficiency of the project be made available for all public inspection.

I also recommend that today's Congress adopt high-bound funding for the new Resource Conservation Act. I believe that low-bound funding will seriously threaten the strength of the Resource Conservation Act. Based upon an inflation rate of 5 percent, the $735 million allocated in 1983 will be worth only $598.6 million in 1987. Based upon a metered inflation rate of 3 percent, the $735 million allocated in 1983 will only be $650.69 million in 1987. Regardless of any inflation rate that we face, $735 million today will not be $735 million in 1987 and our Congress and any administration in Washington should not imply that it will be. High-bound funding will insure adequate funding for a national priority; resource conservation.

I see no point in mortgaging the future of agriculture by today's budget battles. We need to look beyond the shortages of today's income and provide for the future of our children and the future generations of America.

The erosion trends of the past couple of decades can be reversed and corrected, but only if today's Congress will respond. I urge you, Senator Jepsen and Senator Huddleston and Members of your Congress, to act aggressively and quickly to solve our resource problems so that we will all believe in the future of farming and in the future of America.

I might point out, in a bit of humor, that the FFA now has spread to some urban areas including 200-plus members in New York City and some 50 members now in the District of Columbia.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Senator HUDDLESTON. Thank you. That's a fine statement. In fact, I think all of you to the present time have made fine statements and I will yield to the chairman of the subcommittee.

Senator JEPSEN. I thank you, Senator. Yes; as the day goes on—we could go on another 72 hours—they keep getting better and better all the time. We may be able to go back and arrive at a total solution for this problem we have had for a long time; for well over a century and certainly well over 72-some years in this country.

I detect a slight note of determination to get about the business of activating some very effective soil conservation practices from most of the people that have testified today.

I am a little bit surprised that not much has been said about education in the schools. You know, as the tree is bent, so is the tree inclined. Scott really brought this home. A young man with a good command of the King's English expressed himself very well with a firm grasp of the problems and able to elaborate on them and how important it is that we have soil conservation practices in appreciation of our land.

The fact that Sam McElroy mentioned something about the practices in Europe and Germany, how neat and clean the forests are; I too have seen those. But, you know, the whole family goes walking in the forest every weekend. The youngsters are growing up to not only respect but to expect that's the way it is. And yet we don't have the soil conservation course, I don't think, in any grade school in the country right now or an appreciation of the land. Do we; does anyone know?

Mr. **Shaw**. Senator, I checked with the vocational people before I left this morning.

Senator **Jepsen**. Would you speak in the microphone?

Mr. **Shaw**. I said I checked with the vocation AG people at the local high school this morning and as to what the program is for education in conservation at the high school level. Currently the Future Farmers of America, the AG students are the ones that are getting this conservation education; the general curriculum does not include it. It probably should since it is everybody's problem and not just the farmers. But at this time they—that's where it's being gotten; it's being gotten by the AG students only.

Senator **Jepsen**. Gosh, someday we should get more land. I'm just trying to wind it down here and was trying to summarize and bring together some points of what our main purpose has been and still is; to solicit and receive. So, with that, I would commend each of you for your statements.

I would not disappoint you, Mr. Graddy, I will ask you about what you would do to preserve this prime farmland; and I'm going to also ask Scott because he made a special point of that in his remarks. I heard you say what should be done and now I'm going to ask you how we should do it. You might think about it while Mr. Hank Graddy elaborates further.

Mr. **Graddy**. Senator, I think there are three parts to try and improve protection of prime farmland and they've all been mentioned in part in the discussion today.

The first part is to make sure the Government is not aggravating the problem itself. The national agriculture land study was the report that identified the Government, Federal and State government, as a prime contributor to the loss of prime farmlands, loss of farmlands. Whether it takes something equivalent to a national environmental protection act, that is, a national agriculture impact act or whether it can be done by Executive order remains to be seen. The Executive order I think President Carter implemented I assume is lost at this stage. The first step is to try to get the government at the State and Federal level to recognize that it impacts prime farmland.

The second avenue that I would suggest is along the lines of the Wisconsin and Michigan agriculture district bills. They have features that Kentucky's bill does not yet have. They have certain State tax incentives. Farmers can put their land under contract not to develop for a particular period of time. As I read the Kentucky program, it obligates the farmer not to develop it, but it doesn't commit him for an extended period of time and it does not offer a financial incentive; it simply means the State will not plan to build highways through the agricultural district. I don't minimize it, it's a good first step. I think something like that at the State level that is geared to setting up agricultural districts where there are prime lands on a voluntary basis with financial incentives is the first route. When that fails, if it fails, then I think consideration of a national level voluntary tax-incentive for committing not to develop prime farmland is the preferred way to go.

Now, when I talk about mandatory controls out of context, I'm talking about sanctions for violating erosion standards. I would also want to go as far as possible to protect the private property owner's right to use his land as he chooses to. At this stage those are the three ways that I would approach the problem.

Senator JEPSEN. Scott?

Mr. WRIGHT. Senator, I think for the program to get its maximum potential of success we're going to have to keep as much control of this thing at the local level where farmers will have input into it and will understand why decisions were made to do something this way or that way; so that they don't feel that the fat bureaucrats in Washington are trying to push something over on them, even if that isn't the case.

What I suggested—and I think this is very feasible in different communities—would be for local soil conservation districts, ASCS offices, and county agents to survey each farmer and draw up different types of land on that farm; whether it's class 1 land, class 2 land, class 3 land, and classify this land, you know, based upon its slope or its soil, workability, and the depth of the topsoil, et cetera, and to determine what the maximum potential of that land could be used for; whether it should be put in soybeans every year or crops continuously, whether it needs to be cropped 1 year out of 5 or 1 year out of 3 or whether it should be put in pasture permanently or planted in forestry. We need to determine what the maximum potential is for this land and then encourage our farmers to do this by denying any form of Government assistance to them such as price supports, loan guarantees, new loans to expand, things of that nature. You know, this is not compulsory and as such we're not requiring farmers to do this, we're just not letting them have eligibility for Federal programs, even deny eligibility for future PIK program. This will force farmers to use their land to the maximum potential.

I think, to make this thing effective, we're going to have to make it feasible for our farmers. By that I mean, if we're going to force Jim, for instance, to take his marginal land out of soybeans and put cattle on there; we're going to have make the price of cattle and what he can get in return for his dollar invested equitable, comparative-wise, with what I can get for planting my land in soybeans. I don't know how we can solve that problem, whether it be in price supports or stimulate a new market somehow.

But this is a serious problem and it's going to take a sophisticated solution. It's going to require solution in three different areas. What I was advocating was using our land for its best use, for its maximum potential, and denying any form of Government support such as price supports, eligibility for PIK, FmHA loans, whatever they are, to a farmer who refuses to do this.

Senator JEPSEN. Very well said. I'm impressed. Senator Huddleston?

Senator HUDDLESTON. I have no further questions.

Mr. Chairman, I would just again thank you for coming to Kentucky and conducting this hearing. Thanks to all of those who participated. The comments that have been made today, of course, will be added to those that you gather at your other hearings around the country. I think the extensiveness of this hearing process that Senator Jepsen has entered into is going to give us a wide variety of comments from sections that have basically some different interests as far as agriculture programs are concerned. It will be very helpful to the committee in plotting the course it will take in responding to the proposals that have been made and suggestions that have evolved from the RCA. Your statements will be very helpful to us. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all of you folks.

Senator JEPSEN. Sam, Hank, William, Gayle, Jim, Scott, thank you very much. Is there anyone on the panel that would like to make some——

Mr. McELROY. Just one thing, Senator, you mentioned something about this education, that education hasn't been mentioned today, too much and that kind of concerns me too but I hadn't thought of it. But I used to teach some agriculture a few years ago and I remember we had a regional director-supervisor that also said that you learn by doing. I think this PIK program is a good opportunity. I'm not real strong on regulations either, but I think as populations increase we come under more regulations. Maybe this PIK program as an incentive for a farmer—he might learn by doing—for instance every 100 acres he puts in PIK that he would install one conservation practice, that he has a conservation plan and installs one conservation practice as directed by the district conservation or approved by the district conservation. In that way, when he establishes one he learns through that process and he can see the benefit of it and then he would go right on. That's kind of the type of regulation I was referring to.

Senator JEPSEN. Anyone else on the panel? Yes, ma'am?

Ms. LAWSON. I would like to ask a question regarding the role of the States—I got a little bit behind on the time and didn't get to some things that I wanted to say. Who will decide what criteria will you use by the State for the allocation of funds from block grants?

Senator JEPSEN. Well, that criteria hasn't, as was testified earlier today, I don't believe been determined yet. No one seems to be able to get a hold on that criteria. Is that what you understood?

Senator HUDDLESTON. That is right. The normal method would be: At the Federal level there would be certain minimal—and the more minimal, of course, is the most desirable, in some respects, as block grants usually work, to give the States as much flexibility as possible. But the Federal Government has never been in the habit—whether they call it block grant or whatever—of just pushing money out into the States without some strings attached so you can be sure that there will be some kind of minimal standards at least that will have to be followed.

Ms. LAWSON. Do you feel that this would possibly be based on tons of soil loss and, if so, would this discriminate against noncrop areas like the mountainous regions where timber is the big crop because you don't measure your profit in tons of soil lost in a timberstand?

Senator HUDDLESTON. I'm not certain how it would be handled. I am sure that soil loss would be one factor; but maybe not the only factor.

Ms. LAWSON. Do you foresee any funds being made available for those areas that are considered national concerns that are not priorities 1 and 2; for instance the solid waste management or the organic waste management that was mentioned by Dr. Frye earlier today?

Senator HUDDLESTON. Well, in some way, in some method I think funds will be available for these purposes—not necessarily through this particular program, but through some program.

Ms. LAWSON. There will be other mechanisms by which those national priorities could be addressed?

Senator HUDDLESTON. I would think so.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you very much. Is there anyone else now that has—as I indicated in my opening remarks, if there is anyone here that has prepared a statement that they would like to have in the record or desires to testify * * *

Yes, ma'm? Would you come forward, please?

STATEMENT OF DOROTHY L. STEELMAN, CHAIR, ANDERSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Ms. STEELMAN. Hello, my name is Dorothy Steelman and I am chair of the Anderson County Conservation District which is a county about 50 miles away from here. I bring to you family greetings. We cycle across Iowa every year and we meet many Iowans and share thoughts and comments.[1]

I've enjoyed seeing from an intimate way all of your conservation efforts in your State, particularly on the Cedar River and all the wonderful parks the conservation districts have installed there.

My main concern is not today on the RCA program, but the funding for the ACP program. Our county is a hilly county, the soil loss cannot be measured in thousands of tons but is very thin, very fragile—we're mainly engaged in dairy and beef operations and each farm has a small tobacco base.

The ACP program is the program that has provided us the cost sharing funding for seedings and for other technical assistance on ponds and sod and waterway diversions; that kind of thing. We have seen this program used extensively. We have not seen the funds increased. In 1979 we got $14,000; this year we're now getting $12,000 and the demand for these funds has accelerated recently and in the past years.

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[1] See p. 396 for a letter from Ms. Steelman to Senator Jepsen dated June 2, 1983.

One of our concerns is that the ACP program be maintained because it provides a very good example of what can be done in education in the conservation effort. The conservation district does give a lot of citizen education in the farm-city tour, the county fair, we have youth activities, soil conservation breakfast; this type of thing. It would be a real adjunct to keep this program and increase the funds for this program because it's a really—a sort of show-and-tell that works for our county. We have a tour once a year of the various conservation practices that were installed over the year and many farmers come out and view those. So I would just like to make a plea for that program to continue and, if possible, to increase the funding for it because I think there is a real need for that. We in the conservation district feel that the ACP program is a real asset to our work and would just like to put our plug in for that program.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. I would like to thank everyone again for coming today. Many concerns that I have heard today are my feelings and I know those of Senator Huddleston.

I especially want to express my gratitude again to my distinguished colleague, Senator Huddleston, for sponsoring the subcommittee in Kentucky. I think it is very fitting and appropriate that we did have one of the first subcommittee meetings on the RCA here in Kentucky with initial input and leadership that Senator Huddleston gave and in sponsoring that legislation. I think it's important for the people of Kentucky to know that their Senator has been a leader in soil and water conservation and that he is continuing to support initiatives in Congress to make certain that these needs are observed.

The Department of Agriculture has had 5 years to assess the soil and water needs of this Nation. In my opinion they worked hard, but the job is not complete. Proposed national programs still leave much open to question and does not really seem to lay out a definite soil and water conservation program that can be used as a guideline over the next decade.

The subcommittee will continue on to face these series of hearings. Then on June 28, 1983, a Washington hearing will be held to listen to the views of the farm organization leaders. Following this, the subcommittee will issue a report and analysis of the situation. Based on this analysis Congress may decide to take further action as and where and when needed.

Again, Senator Huddleston, thank you for your gracious hospitality and I might add that this group of witnesses today—and I have held many hearings—has been one of the most stimulating and interesting groups I've ever had the privilege to sit and listen to. We've received great testimony from our great State of Kentucky.

Senator **Huddleston**. Thank you very much, Senator Jepsen.

Senator **Jepsen**. The hearing is recessed.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the subcommittee recessed, to reconvene, at 10 a.m., in the Best Western Starlight Village, Ames, Iowa.]

REGIONAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEEDS

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 1983

U.S. SENATE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION,
FORESTRY, AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY,
Ames, Iowa.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in the Best Western Starlight Village, Hon. Roger W. Jepsen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Jepsen.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER W. JEPSEN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator JEPSEN. I'd like to welcome all of you here today. Can you hear me in the back?

I asked that question a few months ago at a rather large gathering at an auditorium, and I somehow got the feeling after I'd been speaking 5 minutes or so that they couldn't hear me in the back. So, I said, "Can you hear me in the back?" And somebody stood up and said "No," and somebody stood up in the front and said "I can, and I'll trade places with you."

I've got to watch that.

I would like to welcome all of you here today on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry, and Environment of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

As chairman of the subcommittee, I am looking forward to hearing your views on soil conservation and the preservation of the productive resource base of this Nation for both the present generation and for future generations.

I know many of you here personally—as friends—and as true leaders of conservation in our State. Iowa can be real proud of the programs that it has. The more I hear, the more hearings I hold—as I have across the country—the more greatful and appreciative I am of Iowa soil. Your knowledge about conservation—the problems and needs of Iowa—and your suggestions on how the Federal Government can best serve you and help you carry your conservation plans, will be invaluable.

More importantly, your views on the implementation of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977—the RCA—and your thoughts on the direction of soil conservation policies of the future are vitally important.

Before I discuss the purpose of these hearings and what we hope to accomplish, I would like to express my appreciation to Peter Myers, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service in Washington, for his interest in joining us today.

Pete, I really appreciate you coming to Iowa to hear testimony on the final report. I know I speak for many of my colleagues on the subcommittee and in the Senate who have been pleased by your sensitivity and willingness to listen to all points of view on Federal conservation programs.

Pete, I know how hard you work. As I drove up here this morning you told me, and I ask you again, "How many States have you been in in your personal interest in developing a Federal direction for our conservation system throughout the Nation?"

Would you want to say a few words? How many States have you been in?

STATEMENT OF PETER MYERS, CHIEF, SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. **Myers**. Over 40 States, Senator, I guess it's significant—and I am pleased to be here this morning—to be in what I consider some of the best farming country in the United States, I've been in a lot of States, and you do have good agriculture here. Several States can say that. We do have problems in Iowa, too—soil problems basically. I think we're working on them, and I'm going to be very interested in what your soil conservation leaders feel about the direction we're going, and I'll be listening to hear new ideas that they have.

This is for me a very opportune time to learn what the farmers really want—to blend what the politicians will allow, with what the farmers really want and what soil and water resources really need.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Pete. This effort has been particularly clear in recent months with the administration of the payment-in-kind commodity program. SCS has been working diligently with ASCS to put conservation practices on PIK land.

Selecting Iowa over the other States—I was in Mississippi, and Kentucky a week prior to this, and will be in Vermont later on—I appreciate this very much.

I hope you will relay my concerns and those of our witnesses today to the administration. We all feel that soil conservation is a national priority and needs to remain on the Federal agenda. Before we call the first witness, let me briefly explain why we are conducting these hearings and what we hope to accomplish.

As most of you know, the subcommittee held initial hearings on March 9, 1983, in Washington, D.C., on the U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] Resource Conservation Act [RCA] final report and program document.

This hearing was the first major Senate effort in 2 years to focus national attention on the serious soil erosion and water conservation problems that we as a nation must confront over this coming decade.

The first two hearings were held 2 weeks ago in Jackson, Miss., and Louisville, Ky. Those hearings set the trust for the subcommittee's nationwide congressional investigation of soil and water conservation problems, and how the USDA is confronting these problems.

Continued Federal interest in soil and water conservation programs is essential if the United States is to meet future domestic and worldwide demands and needs for our food and fiber products.

Domestically, some analysts estimate we cannot feed ourselves, even with today's burdening surpluses. Last week at the hearing in Kentucky, a sociologist from the area informed me the average supermarket does not have a food supply that can last for more than about 2 days. He further stated that in our homes, the food supply generally does not last for more than 2 weeks. Thus the conservation question becomes a question of food security.

A nation that cannot feed itself is a nation in deep trouble. The United States must always maintain the capability to feed our people—and to do it independently of any foreign source.

Internationally, some estimates indicate that by 1990 1 out of every 2 acres will be used to grow crops for export. Thus, our farm policy will be directed toward the demand for U.S. agricultural products. We must be cautious in our zeal to produce for the export markets, to use our resources wisely—to manage them—but not to deplete them.

An enduring Federal commitment is paramount for the continued success of our soil and water conservation programs. Throughout the years and characteristic of all recent administrations, the committment to finance soil and water conservation has waned. This year, in their proposed budget, the administration requested $300 million less for soil and water conservation activities than last year. Even in times of fiscal austerity this seems to be particularly severe and unwarranted.

I would like also point out on the other side of the coin that basically the Congress has always put those funds back in, and I expect them to do the same thing this year, but it is suggested that good land stewardship is not a priority in our overall farm effort.

To me, adequate soil protection and water conservation efforts are the foundation upon which most farmers would want to rely.

Other concerns are generated because of the noncommittal tone of and conflicting statements in the final report and program document.

For example, in the 1981 RCA draft report, it states: "* * * even with the most optimistic outlook * * * soil erosion after 50 years would still exceed the nondegradation level." In the final report that we are examining today, the first objective is to lead to nondegradation of the Nation's soil and water resources.

Yet, if the most optimistic outlook is not expected to achieve nondegradation in 50 years, how can we expect a scaled down program proposed in the final report and restricted by the 1984 proposed budget to lead to the nondegradation of our soil and water resources?

I am also troubled that neither the priorities nor the proposed program refer to the retention of prime and unique farmland. In addition, the 1981 farm bill authorized the Department to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the special areas conservation programs. The matching grants program and the RC&D program, among others.

The proposed budget will not pay for the administration and implementation of these and other conversation programs. Congress can and has restored funding for many of these programs.

We are communicating directly, Chief Myers, with your staff in the SCS, and with Secretary Block to request administrative actions that would carry out the intent of the law.

I know that you and the Secretary share our concerns, but unfortunately, some in the administration do not.

We in Congress cannot progress without the interest and support of the public. I need to know if you share my concern, where your needs differ, and what you feel is necessary to help you as a farmer and a resource user carry out soil and water conservation on the farm.

I questioned the administration's intent first, and asked for a full and complete explanation of the RCA report. Now I am traveling across the country to listen to the views and opinions of all of you. I have come from Jackson, Miss., to Louisville, Ky., now to Ames, and then on to Vermont for a New England regional hearing. Additionally, in my capacity as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, I am simultaneously conducting a series of hearings in Washington and throughout the Nation to explore all aspects of farm programs—their current effectiveness and their future appropriateness to ongoing farm policies.

As part of that effort, I will be asking government officials, private sector analysts, specialists in academia, farmers, and other citizens how soil and water conservation efforts can be better integrated into all farm policies.

We will bring the Joint Economic Committee to Iowa July 1, 1983, for the first of these field hearings.

The RCA hearings will culminate at the end of June. The subcommittee will hold the final 1983 hearing on the RCA in Washington, to listen to the views of the farm organization leaders who represent many of your interests as well.

I've heard the administration's view.

I am coming to you for your opinions and comments.

I am not telling you what Washington thinks or what Washington wants you to think, or to know. I am asking you first, about your needs and for suggestions.

I will return to Washington and share these concerns with my colleagues in the Senate and the House. Congress will debate and deliberate the issues, the questions, and the problems. From these discussions we hope to reach a balance that will serve as a guide to Congress in directing the administration as to what you, the people, want.

We have a full schedule of witnesses today, including a friend from Colorado, Leon Silkman. I would appreciate each of you summarizing your remarks into a few salient points. Both your summary and your full statement will be part of the permanent record. This will allow some time for questions and discussion among ourselves.

I am also happy to accept testimony from anyone here today who is not on a panel, but has something prepared for insertion in the record.

I would hope that if you should desire to testify in any way that you will have your statement in writing or be prepared to give it in writing later on or whatever you desire to present to us at the end of these hearings. Finally, I would invite all of you to sign the book at the back of the room, with your name and address, for the record. Right now we will begin the hearing with a short film provided by the Soil Conservation Service. Welcome to all of you, and I'm looking forward to a good day of hearings.

You may proceed. Can we have someone dim the lights, please?

[A short film was shown.]

Senator **Jepsen**. At this time, I would like to invite the members of the first panel, and I'm going to murder the first name—Walt Peechatka, who is the executive vice president of the Soil Conservation Society of America; Russell Guhl, president of the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners; Linda Bindner, regional director, Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners; Prudence Leachman, chairperson of the Polk County Soil Conservation District; Wally Taylor, Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club; Diane Shivvers, Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club; and Ron Lawfer, board member of the American Farmland Trust.

Please come to the front of the room. I hope we have enough chairs. Thank you. Shall we proceed from my left to my right? Will you please identify yourself, who you represent and then proceed? Now, take the mike and put it directly right in front of you. This is a real sensitive system. I would advise you that the testimony will be collected from you afterward.

Ron.

STATEMENT OF RONALD LAWFER, KENT, ILL.

Mr. **Lawfer**. Senator Jepsen, Administrator Myers, members of the Senate Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry, and Environment of the Agriculture Committee, and others interested in the job of preserving our soil, I appreciate this opportunity to testify today.

As a dairy farmer from northwestern Illinois the conservation of the soil productivity which has provided a living for me and my family for 25 years is of great importance. My 350 acre farm is located in a rolling area of Illinois which has been untouched by glacial activity. Slopes on my farm range up to 12 percent which is similar to many parts of this great State of Iowa. About 320 acres of my farm are cropped in row crops and hay rotations. The remainder is in timberland and pasture.

Because of this topography, during the last 25 years I have used many types of seed bed preparations to produce my corn crop which is the only row crop I produce. When I started farming I used a system called "wheel-track" planting by redesigning a small tractor and planter. Later I started chisel plowing and some no till and selling the mold board plow. Currently I am using fall chiseling and wheatland sweeps in the spring to keep a maximum of crop residues on the surface. All of this I feel has been beneficial in keeping the topsoil in place, which is necessary as the topsoil averages about 6 inches in depth on our timber origin soils.

Three years ago my wife Pat and I were honored by being named soil conservation family of the State of Illinois. I served as a member of the Illinois ASC committee from 1974–77. Another activity I have found interesting during the last year is serving as a member of the steering committee of the American Farmland Trust project on soil conservation policy.

Also I have been involved in the local process of the Resource Conservation Act both completing the survey, questionnaires, and serving as chairman of the county meeting. But I felt that this exercise limited the depth new ideas could be expressed so I welcome this opportunity to go into limited detail, on my thoughts of the relationship between soil conservation programs and farm price support programs. To do this I would like to use my farm, which is in the rolling county of Jo Daviess in Illinois to emphasize some points.

Since activity in the 1983 farm programs has been very high among all farmers, I would like to point out how this has affected my farming operation and how it effects soil conservation.

Because of past cropping history, which I reported in previous years to the county agricultural and stabilization and conservation service office, I have a 180-acre corn base and 20-acre wheat base. This year I enrolled in the payment-in-kind program for corn at the 50-percent level and also I had my whole base bid accepted for the wheat. As you can see this had greatly reduced my grain production but what will be accomplished in conserving my soil over an extended period of years? I want to point out how my past farming practice of crop and hay rotation and contour strips of alternate hay and corn has served to penalize me in this year's farm program.

If, over the past 3 years—these are the years from which my corn and wheat base history is established—I had planted corn and wheat, fence row to fence row, I would have been rewarded by this year's program for planting all of my sloping land to row crops and grains. Jo Daviess County is very much similar to Marshall and Tama Counties when I drove through Iowa today. To me this points out the need for both local and national leadership in developing a long-range program to provide needed stabilization of crop production and consumption and also provide conservation of our soils.

Little is accomplished for soil conservation and sediment control when throughout Illinois and Iowa you can see level fields lying idle while the hillsides are in row crops, but this is the result of the 1983 commodity production reduction programs which uses cropping history to establish program benefits.

Jo Daviess County is rated about 11 percent level and 89 percent gently rolling, but the 11 percent has a high yield that makes it more beneficial to participate in the program. And, of course, they could raise their yields—the established yields—this year; so, the bulk of the land that was taken out of production is the 11 percent of the land that's level in Jo Daviess County.

How could this be changed? Simply instead of my farm having a corn and wheat base, I should have a conservation base.

This simply would be cropland that would be subject to high soil losses if it's in row crops. A possible criteria would be to make cropland eligible if conventional crop methods would result in a soil loss of two times tolerance or T. This way the base acreage probably would not change much as owners or operators changed.

Also, the CNI is coming out—maybe you can classify it as class 2 or 3 land, using the new inventory index. Some counties, because of soil characteristics, would have much larger bases than others. However, this is true with program bases currently used.

To operate this program the Secretary of Agriculture would be granted the authority to each designate the amount of cropland that should not be planted to row crops or field grains so as to bring production into line with consumption. Maybe after this year's PIK program and other food "give aways" no future programs will be necessary. However, if past history repeats itself I think you would agree that crop reduction of production programs will continue to be used regularly for economic and political reasons.

For a farmer to voluntarily participate in the program he would bid for the number of acres eligible for the conserving base and if accepted would refrain from putting this land into row crops or small grains. Bids would be accepted and reviewed by the local ASC committees similar to this year's PIK procedures.

The acres accepted would be seeded to maintain an adequate cover to prevent erosion. This is not unlike the current PIK program in our county. Payment for this agreement could be either grain from the Government reserve or a dollar payment.

To lower the cost of this program and for public relation reasons, an option should be to permit harvesting these acres either as hay or by grazing. I think this is necessary as farmers like to produce not destroy standing crops whether it be hay or grain. Requirements that maintain a winter residue and prevent overgrazing would be necessary. Actually, this program authorizes late grazing, in contrast to this particular proposal. And in the last 2 days that this was typed up I read two headlines in major newspapers, one of them stating that PIK does not fill empty bellies. And I think that this is something that American agriculture is going to have to live with on this year's program. And I think that if a farmer was permitted to graze or harvest hay, it would overcome that.

One requirement of this conserving base program—or any other type of conservation program either new or currently being used—is that agreements and contracts be for periods of time either 3, 5, or 10 years. This is necessary so livestock farmers could adjust their farming operations to these new cropping patterns. Long-term agreements would give farmers confidence to change any necessary machinery and buildings and also lenders could be assured of crop change stability. Probably for political reasons a release mechanism is necessary pegged to commodity prices as is the current grain reserve, by which the Secretary of Agriculture could release all or a portion of the land from existing contracts in periods of escalating prices or national security emergencies. To encourage farmer participation, the farmer could break the contract any time he chooses but he would have to repay any payment received that year. Possibly other penalties may have to be devised to prevent any other abuses of the soil conservation base program. As a member of the Illinois ASC committee I have experienced the skill of farmers looking for loopholes in farm programs.

Once this program was established administration could be more simple than current programs. Farmers would be free to plant any crop on land not in the conserving base program. ASC offices would not be required to keep cropland history on all farms and fields as is presently necessary.

If this program was established it might be argued that the option to permit either hay harvesting or grazing would be a subsidy to the beef and dairy cattleman. I do not think this would be of any more benefit to the cattleman, than the current program is to the corn, wheat, rice, or cotton farmer. In fact, the current program really puts most livestock producers at a disadvantage because most operations feed the bulk of their production. Also, the commodity programs that raise the price of corn and other feeds raise the price of livestock production.

Actually, it's spending commodity programs that has taken the land out of hay and pasture and put it into row crop because of the crop history base that's used in the current farm program.

And I disagree with the film that we just observed that I think under this program, oats and hay would come back into rotation both in Iowa and Illinois.

Senator **Jepsen**. Oats and hay would come back if what?

Mr. **Lawfer**. If—I would hope that this land that is spending time in the conservation base hopefully would improve in productivity and if necessary in a world hunger situation, be available to produce foodstuffs. Just as in military tactics a rifle battalion will commit two companies to action with one in reserve. I think we should look at the conserving base program as our reserve against both national and world hunger situation.

The conservation base program would also fit into a part of our national security program. Especially against the U.S.S.R. I feel that if the current lower agricultural production trends continue in the U.S.S.R., that 20 years from now a productive reserve of farmland in the United States could be of more value in world peace than the MX missiles.

To sum up, Mr. Chairman, I feel that the time is here for a national farm program that benefits those who have not abused the soil. Not enough money is available—as you mentioned earlier in the administration's request—to provide soil conservation assistance to permit row crop on all lands without excessive erosion. Therefore, I think a conserving base program instead of a past history crop base program will serve the purpose of controlling commodity stocks and improve soil productivity to the benefit of all the citizens of the United States and of the world.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to present these views from an Illinois dairy farmer. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have at this time.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. I think, at this time, we'll continue on with the statements.

Miss Leachman.

Ms. **Leachman**. Senator Jepsen, honored guests, ladies——

Senator **Jepsen**. Would you please face the microphone?

STATEMENT OF PRUDENCE LEACHMAN, CHAIRPERSON, POLK COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Ms. **Leachman**. Senator Jepsen, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen: Thank you for allowing me to testify.

I am Prudence Leachman, chairperson of the Polk County Soil Conservation District. I have been involved with the district since 1973, first as assistant commissioner and then as commissioner. I am in my second 6-year term and am serving as chairperson for the second time.

Last month I was in New Orleans and decided to take a trip on the Mississippi. Disembarking to visit a national park, I found a chance to put my hand in the river, the silt-laden river, I might add.

Senator **Jepsen**. Excuse me, but can you hear in the back? The answer is no. Is there someone in the room that has knowledge of this system? Let's get it working right. Let's wait a few minutes. It's a little difficult to speak when you have a microphone halfway into your oral cavity. I don't like to do that, and it isn't necessary.

Let's try it now.

Ms. **Leachman**. Can you hear me in the back?

Senator **Jepsen**. They can now hear you in the back.

Ms. **Leachman**. So, I'll tell them that I was in New Orleans. I put my hand in the river, and when I pulled it out, it said Iowa. I tried to locate Polk, but the counties were flowing and joining together. That, of course, is the nature of soil erosion.

Still, after all these years of soil conservatin work, we are losing Iowa soil down the river. Approximately one-half of Iowa's topsoil has been lost in the 150-years of farming. When you realize it took approximately 12,000 years to form that topsoil for parts of Iowa, a 150-year loss equals 6,000 years of formation. This is a staggering figure.

The question is, have we slowed the progress of this loss in Iowa? Yes, on the land worked with good, approved, well-maintained conservation practices. No, on unprotected land, both urban and rural.

Does the national program adequately address present and future conservation needs in Iowa? The Polk County Soil Conservation District led the way in Iowa in requesting—and receiving revenue sharing funds from the Polk County Board of Supervisors in 1978. This has continued up to the present. We are able to combine Federal, State, and county funds when we cost share with the farmer. The county participation has been an enormous boost to our program. Still, we are not able to cost-share with all the farmers requesting conservation practices each year. They are transferred to a waiting list and are the first to be served the following year. For example, at our meeting today, we have applications on hand requesting $462,075. This breaks down to $431,981 for terraces and $20,094 for sediment basins, grassed waterways, and grade stabilization projects. To put this in perspective, last year, 1981-1982, our total expenditure was $311,304. That broke down into the following expenses: Iowa—$61,861, Federal—$33,239, Polk County—$135,617, and landowner—$80,587. Our 1980-1981 total expenditure was $297,029. That year broke down to: Iowa—$56,741, Federal—$33,337, Polk County—$132,636, and landowner—$74,315.

When you consider that the cost range to build terraces is from $3 to $3.50 a foot or $1,000 to $1,300 an acre, you can easily figure the costs. We accept projects on a priority system set up by the commissioners.

Should the States be assuming more responsibility for conservation needs in Iowa? I have an error in my testimony. I have always heard that Iowa had 25 percent of the continental United States most valuable farmland. I called our office to try to document this, and our district conservationist thought I was asking about Iowa. Well, it has 27.44 of all the class 1 and 2 land in the State, but nationally we have 6 percent of the prime farmland. I guess we have to give Illinois and Indiana and Ohio some of that percentage. Considering the enormous exportation of Iowa grain, we could even say we have a global responsibility to conserve this soil resource base.

The Global 2000 report commissioned by President Carter in 1977, was issued in 1982. From a world population level of 4.1 billion in 1975, at the lowest growth projection, the report projects a 46-percent population increase to 5.9 billion in 2000. The report also projects a 2.2-percent average annual rate of increase in world food production.

> Assuming no deterioration in climate or weather, food production is projected to be 90-percent higher in 2000 than in 1970.[1]

But, relating to our soil resource base, the report says there appears to be two broad categories of possible problems.

> Those related to expanding and intensifying the use of resources are the problems of deteriorating soil fertility, problems of soil loss and sedimentation, problems of desertification and problems related to irrigation. If untreated, the problems of this first group cause a gradual deterioration in resource productivity and declining levels of output.
>
> Those related to increased use of inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides are increased fertilizer and pesticide pollution, increased susceptibility to diseases and pests of high yield varieties grown in monocultures, the potential toxicity of growth-stimulating additives used in animal husbandry and the effects of changing techniques in food collection, processing and distribution. Man-made inputs tend to raise productivity initially, if mismanaged, however, they tend to reduce productivity in the medium and long term, to result in increased output of products of questionable quality, and to contribute to pollution in other sectors of the economy.[2]

Don Paarlberg, Purdue University, writes on the same theme in the 1981 Yearbook of Agriculture, "Enough Food? Sure, If We Don't Play Dumb."[3] He addresses the soil erosion problem as serious and says up to now, new technology has increased overall productivity more than soil erosion has reduced it. He also thinks this will continue to be true at least for a time.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture says the Iowa farmer is now feeding 69 people. Don Paarlberg feels the number will increase. He states, "In Iowa, yields of corn per acre continue to rise, both on average farms and on the better farms, and the margin of the better over the average continues at about 60 to 75 bushels—much as it has been in the past."[4]

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[1] Gerald O. Barney, study director, "The Global 2000 Report to the President" (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 13, Introduction.

[2] Barney, p. 104.

[3] Don Paarlberg, "Enough Food? Sure, If We Don't Play It Dumb," in Yearbok of Agriculture, Will There Be Enough Food? U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1981, p. 290.

[4] Paarlberg, p. 290.

Think of the future pressures on this valuable soil resource base. We must all be cognizant of these future projections and consider them when we plan our conservation programs. In Polk, the county, Iowa and the Federal Government are all involved. I would hope there would even be more future involvement considering the projected need for food. We can help to meet these needs by maintaining the one-half remaining of our valuable topsoil.

Should USDA put any restraints on other department programs that tend to contribute to erosion? In Polk County, we cooperate with the ASCS programs. We feel each Federal program should require good soil conservation in order for the farmer to become eligible for participation.

Should the Federal Government require a farmer to apply conservation practices in return for Federal assistance under other USDA programs? Each farm using a USDA program should have to farm using good soil conservation practices. In Iowa, public awareness of soil erosion and the need for soil protection is at its highest level. The people of Iowa recognize soil conservation as a high priority. The Iowa 2000 program describes, provides for, and is developing procedures to require each farm unit be furnished with a conservation folder not later than January 1, 1985, or as soon thereafter as funding is available. The standard folder could contain:

Short-term and long-term economic effects of erosion.

Effects associated with potential land treatments; economic, yield, operational, management.

Low-cost land treatment alternatives.

Explanation of Iowa's soil conservation laws and landowner's responsibilities.

Erosin impact on long-term productivity.

Estimated erosion rates in the local area.

Rates of acceptable soil loss in the local area.

Potential erosion rates for the dominant soils of the farm unit.

Information on educational, technical, and financial assistance available from various agencies.

With great foresight, the Iowa 2000 program also provides that the seller of land, which has a conservation folder or a farm unit soil conservation plan, will either provide that person copies of these documents or refer the prospective purchaser to the soil conservation district.

Are water quality, forestry, and other resource issues receiving enough emphasis under the currently proposed national programs? This is a matter of priority. Our Iowa soil resource base is an enormous responsibility for Federal, State, and county governments. We must always give it highest preference. Iowa water quality, of course, is improved with better soil conservation practices.

Senator Jepsen, we, involved in soil conservation, appreciate your interest and involvement in this issue. We know you realize the importance of Iowa's valuable global resource by your presence here today, your luncheon address to our Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners meeting in November and, your presence in Congress on our behalf. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Ms. Bindner?

STATEMENT OF LINDA BINDNER, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, IOWA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS, MARCUS, IOWA

Ms. **Bindner**. Good morning, Senators, ladies and gentlemen. I am Linda Bindner and I'm pleased to be invited to participate in this hearing. I am a district soil conservation commissioner in Cherokee County and a regional director for the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners. I represent nine conservation districts in northwest Iowa.

My husband and I are farmers and farm 400 acres of silt-loam type soil with 5- to 9-percent slopes. To control soil erosion on this land, 12 miles of terraces have been installed with 17 acres of grassed waterways. Two small creeks have been controlled with shaped waterways, tile lines, and a concrete erosion control structure. We are using several forms of conservation tillage also.

The erosion control efforts on this land began in 1952 with a conservation plan and have progressed slowly but definitely since that time. These accomplishments are due to the efforts and foresight of many people over the past 30 years and with the assistance of State and Federal soil conservation programs. Without that Government assistance—both technical and cost share—I am sure much less would have been done.

We are here today to evaluate the national program for soil and water conservation. This plan represents the dedicated work of many people and is a major accomplishment.

The priority setting was based on the inventory of natural resources done and reflects our greatest resource problems. I strongly agree with the reduction of soil erosion as first priority and the emphasis on water management and flood prevention as second priority. These priorities are especially appropriate here in Iowa. Effective soil erosion control programs will go far in improving water quality in this State as topsoil and the attached chemicals and fertilizers are the major pollutants in streams and lakes. Good soil conservation will also yield improvement in habitat for many species of wildlife.

In studying the plan, I find it is an excellent beginning in recognizing the problems of resource managment and preservation, but it is not the total answer to solving all these problems. The resource inventories should create a feeling of anxiety regarding the future of this Nation's productive capability. Here in Iowa, with the high degree of State and local participation we have, we are accomplishing only 20 to 25 percent of what needs to be done annually to maintain long-term crop production. In 100 years of farming, the ability to produce food efficiently will be lost forever. Seriously eroded soils lack the organic matter, pH, and moisture properties that allow fertilizers and herbicides to work efficiently. Their moisture-retaining capability won't allow for the achievement of the high yields desired. More energy and horsepower inputs are needed to till soils with high clay content. Petroleum-based fertilizer needs increase to replace lost natural fertility. Resulting sedimentation and other non-point-source pollutants washed from the land harm water quality. It costs more to purify the water. Also, sediment must be removed from drainage channels, flood prevention structures, and water supply reservoirs to maintain their design function. These increased costs amount to more than proper land treatment would have and the soil has been depreciated in the process.

Because of the tremendous needs, the current plan doesn't go far enough in addressing the problems of natural resources and falls considerably short in funding to meet these needs. The plan calls for funding at two possible levels—the higher level increases only enough to cover anticipated inflation and results in no real increases in efforts to control soil erosion. Under the lower funding proposal, conservation efforts would be reduced 26½ percent from their 1982 level to $735 million in 1983 and suffer a 5-percent cut in each of the next 3 years. Even more alarming is the President's budget for 1984. It recommends $694 million for all soil and water conservation programs—$41 million below the plan's minimum recommendation. Add this reduction to the yearly 5-percent cut and we could see programs cut over 50 percent.

In considering the total national budget—and we must consider it carefully in this time of tremendous deficits—we must still think about long-term priorities. To quote Iowa's Sixth District Congressman Berkley Bedell:

> Does it really make sense to cut our all-important conservation efforts by 50 percent while increasing military spending by 36 percent over the same period? Of course, we should have an adequate defense, but we also had better do something to preserve those resources we plan to defend. . . . If we can afford to spend $20 per week for every person to support the military, doesn't it make sense to spend the equivalent of 10 cents—one dime—per person each week to preserve our soil and water?

Obviously, there are great needs as outlined in the RCA plan; the next question is whose responsibility are these needs? I feel that all society will benefit from a properly applied conservation program and therefore all should assume some of the costs. A coordinated Federal, State, and local program would be the most effective. It would allow for developing and implementing plans in smaller units taking in regional and local differences and yet would not be financially impossible for those units of government. State and county funding of conservation projects should not be looked on as an opportunity for the Federal Government to shirk its responsibility and further reduce funding. At the same time, State and county governments need to recognize and accept their responsibilities. Here in Iowa, I think we have an excellent mix of Federal, State, and local funding and control for the identification of conservation needs and application of soil and water conservation practices.

I also feel that it is very important that each unit of government look at all their programs that deal with soil and water conservation, forestry, and mining and work to modify those that lead to major deterioration of our food and fiber producing resources.

Many USDA programs are slanted favorably toward those who use the land most intensively. The current PIK program is an example as it rewards those who have converted grassland to row crops and penalizes those with hay and pastureland. In terms of good land stewardship, isn't that backward? USDA land use and retirement policies need to be adjusted to promote good soil conservation as a part of participation in the program. However, I believe in the voluntary approach to soil conservation and have serious doubts about requiring a farmer to apply soil conservation practices to participate in any USDA program. Cross-compliance sounds commendable when first stated, but I feel it has several serious drawbacks. First, landowner and operator acceptance is going to be minimal and grudging. Second, I see cross-compliance as an administrative nightmare that will land with the Soil Conservation Service and soil conservation districts. The effectiveness of cultural and even some structural practices is so dependent of the weather and rainfall patterns that one year a farm would be in compliance and another year would not be with the same practices in use. Frankly, as a district commissioner, I don't want the responsibility of deciding who is or is not in compliance with a specific standard in any given year.

The targeting of Federal funds to those areas with greatest needs is a major component of the RCA plan. It is probably the most reasonable approach considering the magnitude of need and the limits on funding. Care must be taken that the priority system is followed and target areas don't become political footballs. Also, once an area is selected and a commitment made, sufficient funds and time must be allowed for the projects to be completed. Off-again-on-again funding is extremely difficult for technical personnel and farmers to accept and deal with. Delays and impoundments of funds cause cancellation of projects that may never get started later because other factors have changed. In many cases, the rises and falls in net farm income relate directly to a willingness to invest in conservation practices. Damage from soil erosion and its correction is a concern to farmers but must take second place to keeping the farm business operating in years of marginal profits. Financial stability and reasonable profit in agriculture would be a major step in the right direction by allowing farmers the money needed for their share of cost-share agreements.

The plan includes continuation of the base program of SCS in all nontarget areas. I think it is extremely important this be done and adequate staffing and cost share funds be available. It would be unfair to dismantle successful programs in nontarget areas to obtain the funds to support a greatly expanded target area program. It is through local offices that the voluntary approach to soil conservation is successful.

In reviewing earlier drafts of the national program for soil and water conservation, I was strongly opposed to the creation of additional committees to administer the program. I feel there is adequate structure in place with experienced people and was pleased to see that feature eliminated. Here in Iowa, soil conservation districts have assumed the leadership role in setting policies locally and establishing effective programs. These people are the best prepared in history to move forward with effective soil and water conservation programs.

The final component of the RCA plan I want to comment on is the block grant proposal. I can favor block grants only if they are supported by new funding. To reduce existing programs to begin a new program doesn't appear to be reasonable. If funding can be obtained, block grant projects need to be selected carefully and then funded to completion. It is unfair to participating landowners to start a project with a Federal block grant and then to withdraw that grant and leave the State and local government partner with the responsibility of finding other funds to complete the project.

Here in Iowa, we are in an excellent position to accept and administer block grants because we have a well-developed department of soil conservation and experienced local leadership also. We have just pride in the work that our district conservation commissioners do. These are dedicated people who give freely of their time and are only given their incurred expenses.

The national program for soil and water conservation when adequately funded will move this country forward in using and conserving it's most important natural resources. The standard of excellence we established can serve as an example for all the other countries of the world.

Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Is your last name pronounced Bindner?

Ms. BINDNER. Yes, but it's misspelled on all the papers.

It's B-i-n-d-n-e-r.

Senator JEPSEN. Well, I have it spelled correctly on mine I just mispronounced it. Bindner.

Ms. BINDNER. It's one of those good German things that you almost have to have in order not to stumble over them.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF WALTER PEECHATKA, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, SOIL CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA, ANKENY, IOWA

Mr. PEECHATKA. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I am Walt Peechatka, executive vice president of the Soil Conservation Society of America, with international headquarters in Ankeny, Iowa. Our society is pleased to accept your invitation to testify on the subject of the Soil and Water Resource Conservation Act of 1977 [RCA].

I thought my name was difficult, but I guess simple names are also difficult.

At the outset, we would like to commend the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the intensive effort which it undertook over the last 5 years to complete the RCA report as requested by Congress in the 1977 legislation. It is our understanding that more than $30 million was devoted by USDA to complete this study. This figure does not include the time and the investments by conservation districts and State conservation agencies in carrying out their roles in completing the final RCA program, nor for developing their own plans at the State and local levels. Also, public participation in the completion of the RCA document is not included in those figures. The point is that this was a major investment by USDA, and the Department is to be commended for the emphasis RCA received over the 5-year period and for the final product.

Needless to say, the conservation community anxiously awaited the final RCA report. When it became known that the report was completed and was not being released, there was some consternation in the conservation community. It is apparent that there were other primary considerations that outweighed the importance of the findings and recommended changes outlined in the final RCA report. We caution the Department, the U.S. Congress, and the executive branch against this type of holding action when future reports are released in fulfillment of the requirement in the legislation.

The RCA process was not perfect by any means, but much was learned as a result of this intensive, 5-year study of conservation problems and programs that was required by Public Law 95-192. One key element, and a strength of that effort, was the participation requested by USDA and received from conservation interests at the local level, including farmers, ranchers, conservation district board members, and many others. Over the 5-year period USDA conducted four large-scale public participation activities, including a series of public meetings, a survey conducted by Louis Harris & Associates, a public review of the draft RCA appraisal and program report, and a public review of a revised draft RCA program report and environmental impact statement.

Nine thousand local, State and multistate meetings were held and attended by more than 164,000 people. These people responded by the thousands, on the assumption that their comments and ideas would have credibility and influence in drafting the final program and making subsequent budget decisions.

The key concern throughout the public participation process was how the information that was derived from the public at large and from conservation organizations such as ours, would be used in defining the final program. Frankly, from what we have seen in the last 6 months, the final report is only being used as a guide for a few selected USDA programs and efforts and are being ignored in budget considerations.

For example, the President's budget for fiscal year 1984 proposed $694 million for all USDA conservation programs. This represented more than a 30-percent reduction in the funds Congress appropriated for this important work in the current fiscal year. When matched with the RCA program, which was sent to Congress by the President on December 22, 1982, as the blueprint for the future of soil and water conservation, the difference cannot be reconciled. The 1984 budget ignores, first, what the 164,000 local people said from every corner of the land during the public participation process, and second, what the land itself is telling us.

Upper and lower bounds for funding conservation activities are established in the RCA document. The 1984 proposed budget falls far below even the lower bound set for fiscal years 1984-88. Also, the preferred program would reduce erosion by less than 1 percent per year, according to the final report.

At the same time the RCA document was being released, the administration unveiled a new concept—the payment-in-kind program. This massive intervention by our Government in the land-use decisions of millions of individual producers to aline supply and demand will have a very definite budget impact, as well as an impact on our natural resources. Yet nowhere in the RCA document is there any reference to PIK. Nor in the PIK program is there any mention of the findings of RCA. It is as though they came from two separate worlds. It is a very recent confirmation that commodity and conservation policy run on separate tracks, sometimes at cross purposes.

Had RCA and PIK been tightly coupled, and offered in tandem in planning and implementation with the needed forethought and crosswalk, and recognize that some land-use shifts need to be long term, the gains for soil and water conservation could have been dramatic.

A golden opportunity was missed in not using the RCA document in designing the PIK program.

USDA is now beginning the process of developing the next appraisal, with another report to be issued some time, hopefully, in 1987. Our only comment in this regard is that if the Federal Government is going to devote the time and the energies and the funds to prepare a detailed report of this type, then it needs to be used more effectively in budget deliberations, as well as in the design of new conservation and other agriculture programs.

SCSA has transmitted other detailed comments on the RCA document to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These comments are attached to this statement. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would ask that they be entered into the record of this hearing.[1]

We feel that targeting of USDA and other efforts to solve the high priority problem areas first is an excellent concept. At the same time, however, USDA needs to maintain an adequate nationwide base program to insure that while we are concentrating additional efforts on the high priority problem areas, the low priority and medium priority areas, because of lack of attention, don't, in fact, become high priority problem areas needing our priority attention in the future.

We also encourage the Department and the Congress to investigate the feasibility of a targeted diversion program as well as a detailed review of the normal acres concept so that landowners and operators are not punished for conservation minded cropping practices.

One of the key elements of the RCA program is that of the matching grant concept. We are convinced that if the soil and water conservation program is to be expanded, and to do the job which needs to be done in order to avoid catastrophe in the future, then a level of intergovernmental cooperation beyond that which exists at the present time must be an integral component. Matching grants should be implemented based on title 15, subtitle D of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 [Public Law 97-98].

As you know, USDA included in the fiscal year 1983 budget a request of $10 million for matching grants. The U.S. Congress did not include that funding in the current fiscal year budget.

The fiscal year 1984 budget submitted by USDA does not include anything in the area of matching grants.

If we are going to strengthen the State and local partnership in this triumvirate of governmental involvement, than a matching grant program is an important element. State and local governments in 1981 funded soil and water conservation programs to the tune of more than $200 million. Figures are increasing with each subsequent year.

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[1] See p. 398 for the statement of Robert C. Baum, president of the Soil Conservation Society of America.

States and local conservation districts are developing new initiatives each and every year; cost-sharing programs have been developed in several States; State plans have also become a reality in some States where previously there was not a formalized State program. Likewise, conservation districts have updated many of their long-range plans. As a result the planning effort at the local State and Federal levels is geared to deal with the problems of the 1980's, more so than ever before.

We question whether the provision of matching grants is not currently being funded possibly because of the public response to the questionnaire offered by USDA in the RCA process. If this is true, it is a serious mistake. The questionnaire prepared by USDA was seriously misleading in this area when it asked, "Would the respondent support a matching grant program provided the funds were to come from existing USDA programs." None of the other questions in that questionnaire were worded in this manner, and I suspect that the lukewarm response to the matching grant program was the result of the way the questionnaire was worded.

If the Federal commitment to soil and water conservation continues to decline or remain static, a matching grants program is desperately needed if State and local governments are going to improve their role in this total effort.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture needs to set the example in the whole area of soil and water conservation. The Department should not be contributing to a continuation of erosion problems. A program should be in place to at least stop further Federal subsidies from going to those lands that by capability class should not be intensively cropped. Our society urges early enactment of the Senator Armstrong-Congressman Hank Brown type of sodbuster legislation. We know even those solutions to encourage farming within land capabilities are not simple, because land use decisions and farming practices ultimately relate to the economics of soil conservation and the welfare of agriculture.

While we know that cross-compliance causes some consternation in certain circles, the fact is that that concept is gaining in popularity. We are pleased to note that the U.S. Department of Agriculture now requires applicants for certain types of loans from the Farmers Home Administration to have or request a conservation plan for the land on which the loan is to be used.

Sodbuster legislation is also a form of cross-compliance. And, here again, support for this concept is obvious and growing in strength.

There are other areas that require investigation and further study and then initiative by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to take the lead. An example here is the need for a complete review of our tax laws and rectifying those that work against conservation. If the Federal Government sets the example, State governments and local governments will follow.

Another area in which we encourage further investigation and study by your committee and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is in the area of giving additional recognition to those States that have taken the initiative to date. For example, States which have implemented water quality legislation or soil erosion and sediment control legislation in the agriculture sector need to be supported in their efforts. Their programs need to be studied and the key features shared with other States and local governments. These States also need to be recognized for their initiative and forward thinking in the event a matching grant program is developed.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the subcommittee, the Soil Conservation Society of America has appreciated this opportunity to testify on this important legislation and the RCA program. We ask that our comments be entered into the permanent record of this hearing. We are also prepared to respond orally or in writing to your questions and inquiry concerning the testimony we have offered here today or in any other subject with which you feel we may be familiar. Thank you again for this opportunity.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Thank you, Walt. Now, by the process of elimination—your first name is Diane?

Ms. **SHIVVERS**. Yes.

Senator **JEPSEN**. And how do you pronounce your last name?

Ms. **SHIVVERS**. Shivvers.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Proceed, please.

STATEMENT OF DIANE FORD-SHIVVERS, REPRESENTING THE IOWA CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB AND THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE OF SIERRA CLUB, CORYDON, IOWA

Ms. **SHIVVERS**. My name is Diane Ford-Shivvers, and I'm representing the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club, as well as the National Agricultural Campaign Committee of the Sierra Club.

I wish to thank Senator Jepsen on behalf of the National Sierra Club and the Iowa chapter for this opportunty to present our views to you today.

On the national level, the Sierra Club has targeted agricultural soil and water conservation as one of its eight national priorities for 1983-84. We are especially concerned with the protection of the long-term productive capacity of our soil and with the prevention of accompanying water and air pollution from soil erosion.

At the Iowa level we have recently formed a land use task force to study issues specifically related to Iowa and its most precious natural resource—its land. One of our main concerns is the disappearing prime farmland, and the need for comprehensive land use planning on the State level. Another main concern is, of course, Iowa's disappearing topsoil and the problems associated with this.

Iowa, as I'm sure you're aware, has the worst soil erosion of any State; an unfortunate achievement for a State so proud of its agricultural prowess. The USDA's 1980 assessment says that if erosion is allowed to continue in the Corn Belt, potential yields of corn and soybeans will be reduced by 15 to 30 percent by the year 2030.

A year ago in May during the heavy rains nearly 2 million acres of Iowa land lost 20 tons or more of topsoil per acre, with some fields losing as much as 200 tons per acre. The long-term economic disaster is apparent if we allow this sort of waste to occur, but the short-term effects on water quality, recreation, habitat degradation, fragile lands and quality of life should not be ignored.

Soil erosion affects water quality and air quality. The sediment carried by water runoff contains pesticides, salts, bacteria, animal waste and fertilizer residue. The sediment itself fills our waterways, affecting navigation, drinking water quality and recreation.

Soil erosion caused by wind affects our air quality as well. The EPA estimates from 33 to 239 million tons per year of particulates from croplands enters our air. Dust problems are especially acute in the spring and fall in our State.

The 2,400 members of the Iowa Sierra Club are very concerned about this problem.

We are concerned about the Federal funding for soil and water conservation. We must have a Federal commitment for the conservation of this most basic of our resources. The Harris poll commissioned by the USDA in 1979 indicates that the public is willing to pay for a solid program. Surely our agricultural productivity and the conservation of our soil and water is at least as important as the Nation's defense. We are literally biting the hand that feeds us if we continue this downward trend of funding for the conservation of our agricultural resources. We feel soil erosion is a definite priority, and we feel it should receive priority funding.

The Sierra Club supports long-term agreements between USDA and farmers and ranchers, to protect the soil on a sustained level. The American Farmland Trust surveyed 700 farmers from 6 midwestern States, and 71 percent believe that farmers should have to repay funds they receive from the Government to install soil conservation improvements, such as grassed waterways, terraces, shelterbelts of trees, etc., if these improvements are later removed or not maintained. Because of the Russian grain deal in the mid-1970's millions of dollars worth of improvements were destroyed to enable farmers to plant fence row to fence row. The Federal Government paid about half the cost of these conservation improvements, many of which had been installed in the 1950's.

Of course, the farmer is motivated by the promise of profit, as we all are. The Federal Government has commodity programs that support the price of certain farm products, including, of course, corn. These programs sometimes penalize the farmer who practices soil conservation and encourages intensive farming to maximize production. Long-term agreements between the USDA and the farmer would solve part of the problem of maintaining specific conservation goals.

Another possible solution is cross-compliance. Participation in farm subsidy programs should be conditioned upon implementing and maintaining a conservation program. The 1979 Harris poll found that 75 percent of those surveyed believed that the USDA should not provide other program benefits to farmers who do not properly care for and protect soil and water resources. The will of the majority is plain. Whether it is implemented remains to be seen.

The Sierra Club also supports the requirement of a conservation plan in order to become eligible for a FmHA loan, with the additional stipulation that such a plan will indeed be carried out. Other possible economic incentives are tax incentives to farmers who use conservation systems—and we emphasize systems as opposed to techniques or methods used singly—and disincentives such as are found in the sodbuster bill concerning bringing marginal lands into production.

The Iowa chapter cannot support the allocation of any funds for marginal lands in class 5e and higher, simply because it is impossible to cultivate these highly erosive lands without intolerable soil loss. This land should be removed from all support programs, especially those which have been instigated in the last 10 years of increased production. We support loans for cultivation of these lands only for hay, pasture or forest, and we think no disaster payments should be allowed on these lands.

Of particular concern to Iowa Sierrans is our disappearing agricultural land. We feel that the failure to address the loss of prime farmland to urban and other uses is a serious problem in the national program report. More production capacity is lost through the conversion of prime farmland than through erosion, and we feel that addressing this issue should be a larger part of a soil resource protection program.

As an agricultural nation, we are at a crossroads, and must carefully choose our direction now, while a choice still exists. Iowa has lost half of its topsoil in the last 100 years, and erosion increased in the productive 1970's. Wildlife and habitat preservation, water quality, soil and water conservation, long-term productivity and management should all be a part of a successful soil conservation program. Increased agricultural production and the above are not mutually exclusive goals, if we intelligently use our knowledge and commonsense.

I'll end with a quote I found in an SCS bulletin, attributed to a Nigerian Chieftain: "I conceive that land belongs to a vast family—of which many are dead, few are living and countless numbers are unborn."

Thank you.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Thank you very much.

Ms. **SHIVVERS**. Wally Taylor isn't here. I'm representing him as well.

Senator **JEPSEN**. I appreciate that. Mr. Guhl?

STATEMENT OF RUSSELL GUHL, PRESIDENT, IOWA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS, SHELL ROCK, IOWA

Mr. **GUHL**. Thank you, Senator. Senator Jepsen, Chief Meyer, and staff, my name is Russell Guhl, a farmer from Butler County, Iowa.[1] I am active in soil conservation activities and am a district commissioner in the Butler Soil Conservation District. At the present time, I am president of the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners, and on behalf of this association we want to thank you for letting us testify here today.

I am testifying today because I believe soil erosion is a serious problem—a major problem in Iowa. I believe it is a problem that is still not given enough attention. You've heard the statistics. Iowa has the worst erosion of any State in the country. We have twice the national average. We've lost half of our topsoil, and we could lose the rest in a hundred years.

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[1] See p. 402 for the prepared statement of Mr. Guhl.

Now, these aren't scare tactics. We can see the yellow hillsides every spring and you also saw them on this slide presentation here today. Erosion is a problem on 60 percent of our cropland in Iowa. These kinds of problems in the State that produce so much agricultural wealth for the entire country need to be addressed.

The truth is that Federal funds now being spent for soil conservation efforts is only two-tenths of 1 percent of the total budget. That's not a strong commitment for soil conservation. I realize we have economic troubles in our country, but farmers are among those hardest hit. It's not realistic to expect them to spend thousands of dollars on terraces that will take 30 or 40 years to show returns. And we're talking of an estimated $7 billion needed for the job in Iowa.

I applaud and support the targeting of Federal funds to soil erosion areas as called for in the RCA which are strongly supported by Iowans in the preferred program.

These funds need to be continued—to be extra funds to be used for additional technical and cost share. Two of seven areas identified in Iowa are showing positive results from extra funding. Senator, your home farm is in the seventh target area. I also urge you to continue to support the special areas, conservation program, particularly by funding in 1984 the mid-American area.

The Resources Conservation Act helped us all get a better handle on the seriousness of our erosion problems and to give us an ideal funding to tackle those problems before it is too late.

The targeting effort is helping, but it's only a start. We need to follow through with a Federal commitment to increase funding, or RCA will not be able to fulfill the needs identified so clearly.

Senator, we appreciate the opportunity to address this committee, and I want you to know, Senator Jepsen, that soil conservationists appreciate your efforts in keeping our agriculture productive for years to come. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Russ. Ron Lawfer, you had extensive suggestions saying that we should consider in various programs—and possibly in PIK—that the land is set aside to permit that you be able to harvest and graze on it. Is that correct?

Mr. **Lawfer**. Harvest hay.

Senator **Jepsen**. And graze?

Mr. **Lawfer**. And graze, yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. If we took say, a PIK program on a little lesser scale and provided a formula for providing harvesting and grazing and conservation cover in return for a longer commitment to keep that set aside—would that be something you had in mind?

Mr. **Lawfer**. For example, if the Secretary determined that we needed a 10-percent cutback in grain production, then 10 percent of a certain class of land—this would be a class 2 land or class 3 land—depending on the inventory, what percentage you want to take. OK. For example, maybe 10 percent would be all class 3 land in the Nation would be eligible for this particular program. If I had, say, 50 acres of class 3 land on my farm, then I could bid to the local county committee—say, I would bid $50 an acre to take that 50 acres out of row crop production and put it into hay or pasture and be permitted to graze. In other words, the bid would be considerably less than taking the row crop out because I could still produce something. Now, it's necessary that it be a 3-, 5-, or 10-year program for me as a farmer to invest in livestock and so on or the machinery to harvest this.

Actually, there's a good market for hay. Last fall in our county, hay was bringing $140 a ton and corn was bringing $90 a ton—that's shelled corn.

Senator JEPSEN. Very interesting. Thank you. Pete, do you have any questions?

Mr. MYERS. No.

Senator JEPSEN. Prudence, I do thank you for your testimony. I might add that I got kidded down in Mississippi and Kentucky. They thanked me for all that good Iowa soil. Pete, do you have any questions?

Mr. MYERS. No.

Senator JEPSEN. Linda Bindner, you alluded that all must assume the cost for conservation?

Ms. BINDNER. Yes.

Senator JEPSEN. Do you have any thoughts—when you say all, do you mean farmers and consumers?

Ms. BINDNER. When the Federal Government is providing cost-share money, this is all the people. People that pay taxes are providing this money. What I'm saying is that the Federal Government needs to continue to put a large portion of the money into conservation programs. State and local governments have responsibilities and need to be putting money into, but when the Federal Government does, this is money coming from urban Los Angeles and urban New York and other areas who are benefiting from the food that we produce, and the only way that they are going to be able to support this financially is through the Federal Government.

Senator JEPSEN. Do you have a percentage breakdown?

Ms. BINDNER. No; I don't.

Mr. MYERS. I happen to agree with what you said about tying soil conservation programs, with voluntary compliance, but I wonder how you're going to work it? It's interesting because Secretary Block believes, in part, that we should somehow tie soil conservation into farm programs. But how do you do it voluntarily? That's where we're agonizing at this point.

Ms. BINDNER. I think one of the ways that you do it is that you include hay land and pasture land and rotated pasture as crop acres. You do not exclude these from crop acres as they are now in the programs. I think that the participation in PIK this year does not require any crop cover on land that is set aside. I think there should be a required cover. I realize that you can use the crop residues from the previous years and so on, but I think it should be a planted and growing cover on cropland—or on set-aside acres.

I also think that if you emphasize the need to farmers as you set these programs up that when you voluntarily comply with the program, then you also can encourage this conservation use. To tie the two together and say the—the thing I have against telling people you must do it this way.

So, it's a difficult thing to deal with and I don't have any real concrete suggestions, but I hate to see us telling a farmer you must do it this way because I don't think he's going to accept that.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Walt, you're right on target, you mentioned among many good things long-term planning. I think everybody would say both those on the producer's area and in the processing area and in the governmental areas in all areas, that long-term planning is something that we must bring into the agricultural community whether it be in the farm policy made up of the next generation including soil conservation and so on.

On the basis of that, have you heard about the provision that would provide for some sort of wildlife habitat?

Mr. **Peechatka**. Yes, I understand that is the case; however, I'm not that familiar with the total concept.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you think that there will be an interest in keeping some of these acres in a multiyear set-aside for wildlife habitat purposes?

Mr. **Peechatka**. Very definitely.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Walt.

Diane, I gather from your remarks that you think there should be cross-compliance?

Ms. **Shivvers**. I do.

Mr. **Myers**. I just want to comment on one thing which is farmland protection which the Sierra Club supports and basically, we also do. A lot of people aren't aware, but there is a program that Soil Conservation Service offers to State and local governments called the LESA program—land evaluation site assessment, which will go into any local unit of government and help them set up farmland protection, but which is not a federally dominated program.

I think a lot of people aren't aware of this, and it is an excellent program. It provides for local decisions in this program where they can look at their land and decide what they want to do with it.

I didn't know if you all were aware of that or not.

Ms. **Shivvers**. No; I'm not.

Senator **Jepsen**. I have a question I would like to ask and ask each member of the panel to respond. I have done this for years now. It is a difficult question. In your opinion, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Ron, yes or no?

Mr. **Lawfer**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes. Prudence.

Ms. **Beachman**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes. Linda.

Ms. **Bindner**. Yes, with reservations.

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes. Walt.

Mr. **Peechatka**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes. Russ.

Mr. **Guhl**. Yes. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. That's interesting. I would point out that in 1979 when I first held these hearings and on into 1980 when I held some additional ones, the response to that question would have been just about the opposite, but as I've gone from 1979 into 1980 to 1981 to

1982 and come into 1983, it's just about done a complete U-turn. Very interesting. I thank you very much for your testimony. It was very interesting and educational and very informative and all is recorded and will be used.

Thank you very much—all of you.

Now, at this time, would the following people come forward? Jim Meimann, assistant secretary of agriculture, Iowa; Jim Gulliford, director, Iowa Department of Soil Conservation. It that correct?

Mr. **Gulliford**. Close enough.

Senator **Jepsen**. Graydon "Hunk" Anderson, State executive director, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Services; Don Johnson, chairman, State Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Committee; Lee R. Kolmer, dean of the College of Agriculture, Iowa State University; Dr. Vivan Jennings, associate dean, University Extension, Iowa State University; and Michael Dunn, loan specialist, Eastern Iowa Production Credit Association for the Production Credit Associations of Iowa.

You're welcome to come up and take the place of the panel.

Welcome. Thank you all for coming. As I indicated early on and repeated twice since that your written testimony will be entered into the record in total; so, you may proceed and if at all possible, please summarize so that maybe we can squeeze a little more time for questions and exchanges.

Jim, thank you for coming. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF JAMES MEIMANN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, REPRESENTING ROBERT LOUNSBERRY, SECRETARY, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. **Meimann**. Thank you, Senator Jepsen and Chief Myers. Senator Jepsen, my name is James Meimann. I am an Iowa assistant secretary of agriculture. I'm here representing Iowa secretary of agriculture, Robert Lounsberry, who expressed his desire that he be represented to provide information to the committee on a subject about which he has very real and deep concerns—soil erosion. I have represented the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Secretry Lounsberry on the State Soil Conservation Committee, and other related conservation groups for 10 years.

Secretary Lounsberry, of course, knows Iowa agriculture very well. Last year he was president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and as such had many experiences traveling in this country and abroad. He came back with an increased appreciation for the one thing that we easily do better than anyone else in the world—produce food. We are blessed with a unique combination of soil, climate, technology, and industriousness found nowhere else in the world. But lest we forget, the key to it all is the soil. It is that soil which is the basis on which all else builds.

Therefore, when you are getting down to bare essentials, and developing national priorities, it seems to us that the first priority has to somehow encompass the protection and preservation of this most valuable natural resource—the soil.

We know that the administration is trying desperately to control Federal spending, and can appreciate the great difficulty this presents. But ultimately is agriculture less important to our national defense than military spending? Agriculture is arguably the Nation's greatest source of strength and wealth. We as Americans cannot afford to sit by while the basis of that strength is devastated by erosion.

In that regard I think that the results from the public response in late 1981 to the RCA indicate a great deal of public concern and understanding of the problem of soil erosion. In addition I think that a significant number of respondents felt that the public should be involved in this process and indeed must share in the efforts and the cost to bring about proper conservation of our soil resource. Two comments made by those people in the RCA process:

One, establishing clear national priorities for addressing conservation problems: We couldn't agree more. It seems to us that setting conservation of the soil as a top national priority is essential for the kinds of consistent year in year out programs that come through USDA and through other agencies which affect agricultural productivity. Without the establishment of soil conservation as a high national priority it will tend to get lost in the shuffle when the economic going gets tough. It will also have an impact on all other USDA farm programs when they are being laid out in terms of drawing more attention to the need to include soil conservation in the overall approach to those programs.

Two, targeting more USDA funds and personnel to areas where erosion or other conditions threaten the productive capacity of soil and water resources: Amen. This only makes sense to us. There are just not sufficient funds or resources to do the whole job at one time. It is critical to direct additional funds to those areas where the need is the greatest.

With limited resources, we need to be as smart as we can be in utilizing the less than adequate resources which are available. Perhaps this will buy some time, before more irreplaceable soil losses occur. Unfortunatley, we know that Iowa has the worst erosion in the Nation, according to the RCA inventory. We know that current cost-share budgets, in Iowa, of all Government agencies combined are less than one-sixteenth of that which is needed to get practices applied before all the top soil is eroded. We know also that technical help is only one-third of what is estimated to be needed. Seven million acres need terraces but fewer than 500,000 actually have terraces. The job is less than one-fifth done. It's just going to take more personnel and more per dollars to get the job done and so we applaud USDA for the targeting concept and believe that it is the best way to make effective use of the dollars that are currently in existence.

Five questions were asked on which a response was sought during this testimony. I will attempt to speak to each one briefly.

One, does the national program adequately address present and future conservation needs in Iowa? No. As mentioned previously, we are pleased with the targeting approach and the increased dollars in personnel this has meant to Iowa. The fact remains that the resources are simply not available to get the job done, and we are concerned that it will not be done before permanent lasting loss of soil is sustained to the point where our agricultural productivity is forever depleted. We need to make soil conservation a higher national priority. The present national program does not adequately address the present or future conservation needs. Today's cost to implement the recommendations from the RCA proposal is high, but tomorrow's will be much higher, and probably beyond reach, for our children and grandchildren. We must increase the resources brought to bear on this problem both financial, personnel, and programs.

We must also develop new incentives for livestock producers, in order to reduce acreage of marginal land going into cropland.

Two, should the State be assuming more responsibility for conservation needs in Iowa? Probably. And we are happy that this is precisely what Iowa is doing. We believe that it is essential that anyone who is really going to benefit from a program must be involved both from a financial and from a programing standpoint. We think Iowa is unique in the Nation in how it has taken seriously this very grave problem for our State. Certainly the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Secretary Bob Lounsberry are concerned about this problem. Among other things, we helped develop a statement for the Midwest Association of State Departments of Agriculture, an organization of the 12 Midwestern States from which over 60 percent of the U.S. food is produced. This was in response to a request from the Midwest Governors Association for recommended actions that could be taken to protect soil resources in an effort to assure adequate soil fertility to produce food and fiber as needed for future generations. A copy of that statement and its conclusions are attached.[1]

The State of Iowa is somewhat unique in that it has a separate agency devoted entirely to the conservation of our soil. The State soil conservation committee and the department of soil conservation. We think that this alone gives an indication of the priority which Iowa puts on conservation of its soil.

The Iowa Legislature not only was willing to fund the first soil cost-sharing program in the Nation, in 1971, but this year has increased State cost-share by $2.8 million, even in a year when concerns abound that the State treasury may not be in the black on June 30. This indicates a solid commitment on the part of the State of Iowa.

The Iowa Family Farm Development Authority, an agency designed to help beginning farmers, has developed a program to provide low-interest loans to beginning farmers for soil conservation.

And over one-third of Iowa's counties are providing some form of assistance to landowners for conservation purposes.

The Iowa commitment to soil conservation is deep at all levels.

So, yes, we do believe that it's important that States assume responsibility for conservation needs and we would hope that other States would take the cue from Iowa and increase their programs.

However, the Federal Government must maintain the major role in the area of conservation since use of resources is nationwide. Trading food for oil may sound good, in terms of the balance of payments, but in effect, it is mining our soil to pay for our energy needs and at some point, we wiil have to pay the piper. To the degree that soil erosion is enhanced, then Federal policy must be responsive to this need and provide an adequate measure of protection.

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[1] Retained in committee files.

Three, should USDA put any restraints on other department programs that tend to contribute to erosion? Yes. If USDA doesn't take the leadership in encouraging all departments within the agency to promote good soil conservation, then it will not happen. I believe that USDA's policy should encourage good soil conservation.

We do not believe cross compliance is needed in every case. Each program, such as PIK, FmHA loans, et cetera., should require good soil conservation to be eligible for the program. I do not consider this as cross compliance, merely a requirement of the program.

We were concerned that the PIK program tended to favor the farmer who had not been involved in conservation in the past, in that the establishment of the corn base tended to favor the farmer who had a high corn base in previous years. We believe that these kinds of programs should tend to favor the conservation minded farmer.

Another concern we had about the PIK program was the fact that the conservation acres were not required to be seeded. There is just no excuse for this. While the program was primarily intended to reduce production, there was no reason why it couldn't have been a strong conservation oriented program with the requirement of seeding down the diverted acres. Since many of those acres are on the most erosive soils, they are likely to erode without any cover crop as they were planted in corn or soybeans. It would have taken little more time for the farmer to seed down those acres to soil conserving crops than to keep the weeds clipped without adequate cover crop. As State weed commissioner, Secretary Lounsberry is concerned over the potential problems of weed control which may be enhanced by this nonseeding practice.

Four, should the Federal Government require a farmer to apply conservation practices in return for Federal assistance under other USDA programs? Yes. In some situations.

As noted in the report from the Midwest Association of State Departments of Agriculture, a conservation plan should be required of every farmer who wishes to take part in any USDA program. Developing a conservation plan is not that difficult a process, and steps are being taken even today by both the State and Federal agencies in Iowa to enhance that process. Even if cost-share funds are not available to completely fulfill that conservation plan, at least there is an appreciation for proper management of the soil which may not have been in existence had it not been for the development of this conservation plan.

However, we do not favor beating farmers over the head with this, for this may lead to less cooperation and more bitterness on the part of farmers. Commonsense needs to be used in this approach as well as ample cost-share dollars so that this does not become too great a financial disincentive to the farmer.

Therefore, we believe development of a good conservation plan is essential. We believe that there are a number of practices in which a farmer can engage which don't require a large cash outlay, such as contouring, reduced tillage seeding, et cetera. These are the kinds of things that can be required for Federal assistance under other USDA programs that will not be a great financial burden on any farm or landowner.

Five, are water quality, forestry, and other resource issues receiving enough emphasis under the currently proposed national program? We don't think so. Soil conservation in Iowa has a much higher priority than it does in the currently proposed national program. In Iowa, I feel we are more adequately addressing the water quality, forestry, and other resource issues. We believe that soil erosion is our most serious resource concern. When soil erosion is addressed, questions of water quality, forestry, and others, are also addressed in a positive manner.

We are pleased with many of the steps that the State of Iowa has taken in regard to soil conservation. We know that by using integrated systems of structures, tillage, education, et cetera, we are able to bring much of our soil loss down to a nondepleting status.

We also are pleased that the RCA process provided the kinds of inventory necessary to look honestly at the conservation needs in our country. We realize the difficulties extant in providing the resources necessary to speak to this problem from the Federal Government budget standpoint. However, we do believe that soil conservation does need to be given higher national priority. We believe that targeting is useful and we applaud USDA for this approach. But it is not enough. By protecting the ability of this country to feed itself and much of the rest of the world, we will be maintaining ourselves in the enviable position of adequately responding to the most basic of all human needs—the ability to feed ourselves. Ultimately that ability has to translate into a strong base on which to build a strong economy which makes for a strong country able to defend itself.

We believe that when agriculture is prospering farmers tend to reinvest more extensively in their farming enterprise, including installing soil conservation practices. Therefore, programs and policies which tend to enhance the prosperity of agriculture are going to have a direct and positive bearing on the Nation's ability to protect its valuable soil resource.

The time is now we cannot wait. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Good timing. Thank you. I got straightened out in Washington, D.C., on that. Proceed, Jim,

STATEMENT OF JAMES GULLIFORD, DIRECTOR, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF SOIL CONSERVATION

Mr. **Gulliford**. Senator Roger Jepsen, I am James B. Gulliford, director of the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation. I appreciate this opportunity to share with you concerns that many Iowans have with respect to the conservation and proper utilization of our Nation's most important natural resource—our soil.

In 1977, Congress passed the Resources Conservation Act which initiated a strong effort on the part of the people of this country to examine the conservation programs and needs at Federal, State, and local levels. In Iowa, the RCA process enabled over 8,000 citizens to offer program direction suggestions at 100 meetings held across the State in 1978. Four statewide task forces provided further direction.

Iowans identified their major concerns as soil erosion, water quality, land use, and food production. All of these tie together as important issues to the Iowa economy, the quality of life in our State, and our State's ability to continue to feed our country and the world.

Iowa's soil conservation districts, through the 1978 district resource inventory, identified the soil conservation practice needs that face our State; needs for conservation tillage, contouring, and stripcropping. These are practices that require the efforts of our farmers to implement. They also identified the permanent soil conservation practices still needed to protect our agricultural soils. More than 6 million acres of our Iowa soils need terrace construction over the next 25 years to allow continued crop production based on current crop management systems, but we are only installing these terraces at 15 percent of the rate necessary to get the job done.

The need to assess our conservation needs was also felt in the Iowa Legislature. State legislators held four public meetings to examine State program needs that led to passage of our State's Iowa soil 2000 legislation in 1980. This legislation provides a State master plan to address our conservation needs by the year 2000. It is an ambitious, goal-oriented program that will be difficult to meet, but it put us in a position to continue and increase our efforts in this regard.

Economic times have been tough in Iowa, just as they have been nationwide. Short-term economic needs have been greater than in other times, but the State has not turned its back on our long-term goals and soil conservation needs. Since the passage of the Iowa soil 2000 program, soil conservation funding in Iowa has increased significantly. State financial incentives for cost-sharing incentives for no till, low-interest loans for conservation tillage equipment and soil conservation practices, and this year the Iowa Legislature passed a new no-interest loan program to encourage permanent soil conservation practice installation on the part of low net worth farmers. Iowa has maintained and increased its commitment to soil conservation.

The record of the administration and Congress does not indicate that they have interpreted the RCA information the way we have in Iowa. Funding support for USDA soil conservation agencies has been reduced rather than increased to reflect the needs identified nationwide.

Let me cite an example: According to the USDA publication "Agricultural Statistics," in 1951 ACP funding existed at $246 million. In 1980 ACP funding was $205 million; and only once in the years between did the level ever exceed that of 1951.

Over the same period, State and local funding of all types of soil conservation programs increased from less than $5 million to $255 million. While the programs funded in this example are not indentical, the trends are important.

State and local governments are increasing their funding, because of an identified soil conservation need; not as a substitute for Federal support. The States continue to need increased technical and financial support through USDA agencies to meet the soil conservation needs that they have identified and are pursuing.

We need from the Federal Government, and through the support of your subcommittee, the following:

First, long-term, consistent national agricultural policy that recognizes the ability of our farmers to produce agricultural commodities, the economic needs of this country to export agricultural commodities to assist our balance of trade, and the need of our farmers to protect their soil resources. These needs go beyond this year, terms of office, and our lifetimes. Our lack of ability to establish and maintain policy of this nature has hurt our agricultural community and our status in the world's export market.

Second, better implementation of programs identified in the RCA and the 1981 ag bill. Targeting of limited soil conservation resources is important. We target our State financial program cost-share funds and technical assistance to better address our needs. Similar efforts on the part of USDA agencies are, and will continue to show increased accomplishments in critical resource need areas.

It is also time to fund the conservation grants to soil conservation districts and the special areas provisions of the ag bill.

Third, emphasis on incentives to conservation farmers. Although PIK has had conservation benefits, efforts should be made to reward the conservation farmer rather than the farmer with the big corn base. We have the resource inventory through our soil survey program to better target ag programs such as PIK to achieve better soil conservation results.

Fourth, continued research. We are rapidly entering a new era of agriculture based on conservation tillage. We need the same research effort that went into crop management for conventional tillage to support the conservation tillage efforts our farmers are making.

We also need continued and increased research efforts furthering the soil depletion studies that have been a part of our river basin studies. Our farmers and the public must be aware of the economic costs of soil erosion that to date has resulted in cheap food for Americans and reduced productivity of our soil resources.

Fifth, Federal support for State soil conservation programs. States such as Iowa are awakening to the soil conservation needs within their borders. Our soil conservation districts have made their voices heard and our legislators are responding. However, you and this committee cannot let these voices be interpreted as an opportunity to substitute State and local funding for USDA programs. The job before us is far too great. The States need the support of USDA soil conservation programs, and funding must be accelerated rather than reduced. The high bound RCA projection for funding is necessary if we are to continue to feed the world without destroying our soil. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Jim. Hunk, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF GRAYDON "HUNK" ANDERSON, STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

Mr. ANDERSON. Senator Jepsen, Chief Myers, we're glad to have you in Iowa. My name is Hunk Anderson, and I'm the executive director of ASCS of Iowa, and if you want me to I would comment on the 5-acre wildlife after awhile and also on the PIK acres as far as conservation. My comments address several aspects of the RCA 1982 final program and environmental impact statement.

I like the present national program because I think it is good for Iowa. I feel that in its present form, it contributed greatly toward meeting the present and future conservation needs of Iowa. This is primarily because the targeting concept, a key component of the national program, is concentrating Federal assistance in those areas of Iowa where water erosion control help is most needed. I believe that erosion and particularly erosion of cropland is the Nation's single, greatest conservation problem.

Part II of the 1980 act appraisal indicated that the five Corn Belt States—Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio—have 31 percent of the cropland in the Nation. They also have 42 percent of the cropland in the Nation which is eroding at excessive rates. Of the acreage in those five Corn Belt States which is suffering from excessive sheet and rill erosion on cropland, Iowa has more than one-third of that excessively eroding acreage. The targeting concept is developed to concentrate maximum efforts toward protecting a vital national resource base and Iowa's cropland is obviously such a vital resource base. More specifically, in the 16-county area of western Iowa where targeting was begun last year, 75 percent of that 6-million-acre area is cropland. Of the 6 million acres, 2½ million acres of cropland are eroding above the acceptable levels. That area obviously merits special conservation work and under this program, is getting it.

In addition to the regular Federal ACP cost-sharing assistance, the targeted area concept which began in 1982 has in two seasons channeled an extra $2,700,000 into Iowa for ACP cost sharing; of that, $1,820,000 went into the 16-county southwest Iowa area. I believe this is a very fine example of the use of taxpayers' money to abate serious erosion of one of the Nation's most essential natural resources. The effect will be even greater when the full impact of the 5-year targeting plan is in place.

In response to the question of whether the States should be assuming more responsibility for conservation needs, the State of Iowa is already in the forefront of those States which carry a substantial part of the effort toward conservation improvements. Other States should be encouraged to adopt similar State conservation programs. I do feel that if grant assistance from Federal to State governments is used in the future to accomplish conservation work, it should be through the existing framework of Federal, State, and local governments. This should include administration at the county level by the conservation district organizations. The present system works very well and doesn't need fixing.

In regard to possible USDA constraints on other Department of Agriculture programs which may contribute to erosion, I think there is an obvious conflict when high commodity prices result in conversion of highly erodible timber or meadow into cropland; particularly so when that highly erodible land must be then treated at Government expense to limit erosion. Our program must, however, consider the long-term needs of the Nation, and we must be prepared to handle land conversion each time land and commodity prices move higher.

I question whether the Federal Government should require a farmer to apply conservation practices in return for Federal assistance under other USDA programs. Most farmers don't want to operate in a regimented environment and resent being told how they must farm their land. Reasonable conservation principles should be required as an eligibility requirement for Federal assistance but the limitation is, of course, money. Many of those farmers most in need of Government assistance, are least prepared financially to apply permanent conservation treatment to their land. Generally, I feel that the provisions required by the State of Iowa to correct conservation abuses are sound and a sufficient mandatory control.

While water quality, forestry, and other resource issues are all important aspects of conservation, prevention of soil erosion is still of most concern. There is, however, a unique opportunity available through the present payment-in-kind program to utilize idled crop land to install tree planting, farm ponds, wildlife food plots, and a variety of other conservation-oriented practices. We strongly urge farmers and the public to support the control concept but also to enhance the environment. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Hunk. Don Johnson, chairman of the State Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee of Iowa. Proceed.

STATEMENT OF DON JOHNSON, CHAIRMAN, STATE AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE COMMITTEE, FAIRFIELD, IOWA

Mr. **Johnson**. Thank you, Senator Jepsen, for coming to Iowa and bringing the SCS Chief, Peter Myers.[1] I am a member of the ACS committee. The 1982 RCA final program report confirms strong public support for continuing and strengthening existing administration of Government conservation assistance to farmers. My personal associaiton with the Iowa Conservation Districts and my experience as Iowa ASC State committee chairman bring me to the same conclusion. The machinery is in place and working well and we really don't need an overhaul. I believe there is and will be need for running modifications, but not for drastic revision. For example, one of the changes needed in ACP cost sharing would be elimination or sharp increase of the $3,500 annual cost-share payment limitation. Costs for the installation of permanent conservation practices such as terraces are such that very little can be accomplished before 50 percent of the cost exceeded $3,500. To further complicate the situation, it is generally accepted that more efficient and more cost-effective conservation results can be achieved by installation of a combination or system of practices on cropland for erosion control; this might be, for example, a combination of terraces, contouring, sod waterways, and no till. The problem is that the cost of such a system is many times greater than the $3,500 limitation which is available for Federal cost sharing per person per year. Regardless, however, of procedural and other difficulities which retard conservation progress, the present national program is working well. The working arrangements between ASCS and SCS provide a successful effective coalition of Federal conservation effort. In addition, here in Iowa, that effort is supplemented by very effective work by the State agencies and the conservation districts. The rural clean water program Prairie Rose Lake project at Harlan, Iowa is an example of the successful application of multiagency cooperation efforts to achieve pollution control under the present system. We consider it a highly successful erosion- and pollution-control project which may serve as a model for similar projects in the future. The targeting of highly erosive areas involving intensifying of the conservation efforts by means of additional technical help and additional funding for cost sharing is another successful facet of the present national program. The targeting efforts for 1982 and 1983 in western Iowa and for 1983 in eastern Iowa are examples of close cooperation between the Federal agencies accomplishing accelerated conservation treatment where it is needed most. We are gratified that the targeting concept is being handled through the existing combination of SCS technical service and the existing ASCS county network of offices and committees.

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[1] See p. 403 for the prepared statement of Mr. Johnson.

We, in ASCS, feel that the State of Iowa, through the various agencies and conservation districts, are making very commendable progress in conservation work. We believe other States would be well advised to follow that example.

Generally, I oppose the concept of USDA putting constraints on other Department programs which may contribute to erosion. One proposal which appears to have some merit would be for establishment of a service fee payable by purchasers of exported commodities, with the fee to be used to provide conservation funding; the additional erosison resulting from expanding commodity production for export would be to some extent corrected through the marketing system without the need for appropriating additional conservation funds. Obtaining conservation funds from collection of such a user fee might, I believe, help to minimize conflicts between USDA programs that limit achievement of conservation objectives. In the same vein, I believe there may be considerable merit in proposals to compensate farmers in payment-in-kind grain for ACP cost sharing of the cost of installing conservation practices.

I don't feel that the USDA to require a farmer to apply conservation practices in return for Federal assistance under other USDA programs is a very workable approach. Conservation works best when it is an option. I believe monitoring to correct flagrant conservation abuses, especially where infringement on the rights of neighbors is involved, should be handled by the State through the conservation districts. We do believe that the ASCS county committees may find it necessary to assume more responsibility in future to monitor the maintenance of permanent conservation practices such as terraces which have been cost shared. This is because changes of ownership and of farming systems sometimes result in such practices being destroyed during their normal life span.

I would like to conclude by strongly urging that the conservation use acreage idled by the present PIK program be fully utilized to accomplish as much worthwhile conservation as possible. Plantings of trees or shrubs are eligible cover on the CUA acres whether cost shared or not. Land that meets the other program eligibility requirements and on which the trees are planted in the current year will be considered acceptable for conservation use acreage through 1985. Similar eligibility rules apply to water storage, sod waterways, and other similar practices. We feel that the PIK program provides an excellent opportunity to promote and expand conservation efforts and strongly urge participation in those efforts. Thank you very much.

Senator **Jepsen**. Dean Kolmer, how long have you been dean of the college of agriculture?

Dean **Kolmer**. Ten years.

Senator **Jepsen**. Somehow I felt you'd been around forever.

Dean **Kolmer**. I've been in Iowa except for 3½ years since 1951.

Senator **Jepsen**. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF LEE R. KOLMER, DEAN, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Dean **Kolmer**. Chairman Jepsen and members of the subcommittee. Thank you Senator Jepsen and members of your committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on the 1982 final report and environmental impact statement, "A National Program for Soil and Water Conservation."

In September of 1982, the Secretary of Agriculture published a plan to guide the Department's future soil and water conservation activities as per the mandate in section 6 of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act. The appraisal indicated that resource problems threaten to reduce agricultural production and increase the costs of producing food, feed, and fiber. Topsoil is being eroded faster than it can be replenished. Ground and ground water supplies, particularly in the Ogallala area, are being depleted. Deterioration of water quality throughout the Nation continues to be of concern to cities, towns, and municipalities.

The USDA plan proposes to define conservation objectives, establish conservation priorities by targeting fund use in critical areas and maintaining base level assistance where programs are currently fulfilling conservation needs. A system of matching grants proposes to involve the use of Federal, State, and district funds to mount correctional projects, particularly those which have national priorities attached to them.

My comments are based on research studies and analysis of soil conservation programs by the staff of the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station working independently, cooperating as members of interdisciplinary research teams, and as participants in broad-based research undertakings involving scientists from the USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Soil Conservation Service, the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation, the Iowa Department of Agriculture, and the Cooperative Extension Service of Iowa State University.

In addition, Iowa State University [ISU], through its center for agricultural and rural development [CARD], has been working on the Resources Conservation Act evaluation in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The models developed by this project have been used to evaluate the impact of various soil conservation programs (or lack of programs) on agricultural productivity, commodity prices, farm income, food prices, export possibilities, and related variables. These studies which include all major land classes in all agricultural regions of the United States, are continuing in cooperation with USDA in preparation for the 1985 RCA evaluation. Many interactions occur among regions and land groups as alternatives in soil conservation practices or erosion patterns are allowed. Some findings resulting from this modeling and analysis work can be summarized relative to questions posed for this hearing.

Students of soils and other natural resources have long recognized the tragedy of soil erosion and its accompanying effects on soil productivity, flooding, deteriorating water quality, and siltation. But no major attack on soil erosion was mounted until the establishment of the Soil Conservation Service in the United States Department of Agriculture during the thirties. But even before then, informed persons in the Cooperative Extension Service and concerned farmers did undertake mechanical soil conserving measures such as terracing and contouring, and biological systems such as strip cropping and rotations. In fact, the obligate rotations required for most profitable grain production represented effective long-term control of soil erosion.

Given the production technology, including machinery, fertilizers, and other chemicals available in those days, and the nature of the farming economy, our Nation could have controlled soil erosion with a modest sustained effort by private and public efforts. The Soil Conservation Service was equipped with the necessary information about these practices. These practices when added to the cropping systems followed, would permit erosion to be controlled within tolerance limits on many erosive soils. Thousands of farmers did indeed control erosion by adopting these practices.

Whether or not mechanical soil conserving practices such as the use of terraces were even cost effective for the individual is debatable, but studies have shown that now they are not. On the other hand, legume-based rotations were virtually indispensible for efficient grain production in the Corn Belt only a few years after the virgin prairie was placed under cultivation. Many of the practices for soil conservation could be "made at home" with family resources, machinery and power, and farmers needed only the technical skill of the county agent or soil conservationist "to lay out the lines".

Conscientious farmers undertook soil conservation because it was a responsibility which they as stewards of the land accepted with serious purpose. The change to the more highly capitalized and commercialized businesses which today produces most of our food and agricultural export products was a major revolution and its greatest impact developed during about a decade in the fifties.

The very rapid change in farming did not permit institutions or agencies to anticipate many of the new problems arising from continuous monocultural cropping, the relatively inexpensive fertilizers permitting it and the large volume machinery which made old conservation practices impossible. These changes have had a devastating effect upon those soil resources which had any propensity toward erosion. Soil losses have increased and today are higher than during the worst of the Dust Bowl days which galvanized our Nation into action. This has occurred because we lost sight, as a people, of our complete dependence upon our soil.

The national program for soil and water conservation [RCA]. The stage was then set for something to be done to arrest the tragic waste of our soil resource. Interestingly enough the public concern for soil erosion control came from a dissatisfaction with what had happened to our water and not because of what is happening to our soils. Just as over 40 years earlier it came from dust over Fort Worth, St. Louis, New York, Washington, and over the Atlantic Ocean. Thus was born the RCA in 1977.

Three decades of neglect and a major upheaval in farming technology, economics, and practice cannot be corrected in a short period of little more than 5 years even with adequate technology, personnel, and financing. In fact we have been lacking in all three which are still in short supply. We do know some of the technology developments needed and the personnel required to implement adequate soil and water conservation, regardless, it takes time to bring under protection millions of acres of land and to consolidate needed protection in such regions as will efficiently assure consistent adequate food supplies for ourselves and for those to whom we are responsible for support.

Some vehicle such as RCA is desperately needed to focus upon the most critical long-term problems concerning our soil and water resources. Lacking such focus, we could continue to do something everywhere but not enough where it is most needed. Whether we have the will to follow the path indicated by the RCA studies conducted by USDA is not certain. It is certain that the soil and water resource situation shall only deterioriate if we do not or until we do.

We need a unified internally consistent agricultural program with public support to make significant inroads on resource conservation and enhancement. RCA is one way, if it accepts broad-based inputs from agencies, institutions, and individuals. It can be effective in the national interest.

Two major reasons for reducing soil erosion are: to assure continued productivity of sufficient food of high quality and varied sources for an indefinite period into the future, and to assure adequate and clean water supplies with a minimum flood hazard. Both of these objectives are of the broadest interest inasmuch as only some 3 percent of the population farm and they provide food for the U.S. population and also for export sales.

Is it the financial responsibility of citizens in one county or in one State to provide clean water and to reduce the flood hazards for those in other countries and States at a major cost to themselves? If so, the cost would fall disproportionately upon the few for the benefit of many.

Adequate and clean water supplies are of critical concern, mostly to people who do not live on farms. Further, direct benefits of clean and ample water are most immediate to those who capture the water and use it for human and industrial purposes. Likewise reduction in flooding hazards associated with rapid rainwater runoff due to unprotected agricultural land is most important for persons downstream. People still build on flood plains, even those which are well-known and identified in the basic soil resource inventory—the modern soil survey reports soon to be available in all counties in Iowa, for example.

An assured supply of food from fertile productive soils again represents both a short-run and long-term benefit for the entire population. This is a national interest. Soil conservation is intended to provide for the present and future food supplies and the cost of protecting the land should fall as equally as possible upon all citizens.

Farmers should be encouraged to use cost efficient soil conserving practices without subsidy from local and State or Federal governments.

Soil conserving practices which cannot be shown to yield a positive payoff during the average lifetime of an individual operator should be subsidized at least to the extent that the operator breaks even. Because the less populous counties and States generally produce the most food and feed and the greatest potential erosion hazard, failure to provide adequate subsidy would penalize few and benefit many. But, where subsidies are available or other compensation made, it should be the right of the public to expect the full implementation of conservation and protection of the public's investment in the land.

Iowa, in particular, and Iowa counties specifically, have been leaders in local and State support of resource-related activities. By 1988, 81 of 99 counties in the State will have contributed as much money to the field mapping of our soil resources as their partner, the USDA. Also, the State of Iowa will have matched Federal field-mapping costs in 70 counties. At least until all other States have done what Iowa has accomplished, it does not appear reasonable for Iowa to tax itself further to do an inventory of resources.

This State has also undertaken a subsidy of soil-conserving practices by an appropriation of funds to all soil conservation districts. The fiscal 1984 investment approximates the Federal investment. We believe ours was the first State to do this, and few have followed. The State has assumed costs to protect its soils and environment and probably should do no more unless other States and the Federal Government assume a more serious posture through more adequate financial support and internally consistent agricultural programs.

Within the past decade, this State has made a major investment in studying mineland reclamation and the surface mining of coal under conditions of land restoration. A major thrust was to return the mined land to maximum agricultural productivity and the prevention of water pollution by careful redeposit of various elements of the overburden. Through the agriculture and home economics experiment station, Iowa continues to invest modest funds in this research which has widespread applicability.

The soil conservation and water resource enhancement programs require that several conditions be met. These are: An articulation of the various problems and an evaluation of their relative importance; developing technology system sets through research, development, and evaluation; delivering a knowledge of applicable technology systems and technical services to establish them; providing the needed statutory instruments to implement the program; and to generate the resources to meet the Federal commitment.

RCA represents a good start but is likley to be found wanting to varying degrees as it is being implemented. This is because the needed changes are so great in many instances that second and third approximations may be needed as experience proves the first approximation either falls short of the target or exceeds it unnecessarily. It is doubtful that present models will provide a complete solution on the first try. Lack of experience and imperfect basic data are both likely to be responsible.

Even though considerable research has been done on factors affecting soil erosion and water runoff, many of these studies involved systems of cropping and mechanical practices which have been discarded because of new technological developments. Another limitation is that most studies are on a miniscale because these are relatively inexpensive, can be completed quickly, and do not require long-term commitments of large areas such as watersheds. Yet the operational unit in farming is part or all of one or more watersheds, not a 100-square-meter plot. Current available information based on such large areas is woefully inadequate because it is very difficult to fund and execute. An example of this is the experience with the Four-Mile Creek watershed in Tama County, Iowa. Given promise of funding by a major Federal agency, over a dozen local, State, and Federal units and over 60 private farmers were organized to do a watershed study on over 12,000 acres. After the subwatersheds were all instrumented and many farmers changed cropping systems to accommodate the test, the funding agency discontinued financial support. The project had to be terminated without anymore than the initial conditions being recorded. Even more tragic is that our scientists now lack credibility and probably cannot regain the cooperation of this group of 68 farmers who occupy a set of watersheds which have been studied and observed in various studies for about two decades.

The Cooperative Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service are in place in every county in Iowa. They have proved themselves capable of delivering soil and water conservation information and assistance. No doubt they can handle national programs needs of RCA. If additional staff are needed in targeted areas, qualified personnel are being trained in the land-grant colleges of agriculture and can be developed further through inservice programs of SCS and extension.

Not even a combination of Federal and State funding for soil conservation practices in Iowa is adequate to get average soil erosion losses on all acres down to tolerable levels. Obviously, the Federal part alone is even more deficient. The deficiency in other States without State involvement is likely to be just as great. A massive Federal investment, together with appropriate laws, is needed to make good soil conservation a reality.

Both Federal and State statutory authorizations appear to be inadequate to secure the kind of conformity with the national program as would be needed to make major inroads on soil erosion control and water management. One major inadequacy is that most individuals can use land they have purchased in any way they wish and without regard to offsite damage or onsite soil destruction. This also applies to use or misuse of publicly developed and supplied water in irrigation. Until these conditions are changed, we will not have adequate conservation of soil and other resources.

We are one Nation with national goals and objectives. We achieve these to the extent that we are able to secure or require the acceptance of most of our citizens. If soil erosion control is a national goal and in the national interest, then it is irrational to permit certain activities or programs to work at cross-purposes. This applies not only to direct erosion causing practices but also to programs emphasizing production for export which cause the destruction of permanent vegetation on highly erosive lands.

Waste of the national treasures is just as unacceptable as the careless destruction of its soils, water resources and environment.

This is closely related to the question of internal consistency of all programs. Generally farmers have had the option of entering or not entering various programs, few have been compulsory. If agriculture is an entity, then programs for it should be coordinated at all levels and entry into and acceptance of any part of the total program should subject the user to compliance with all other applicable ones.

It is basically unfair for taxpayers-at-large to provide the means and resources for production loans to farmers at low cost and then to pay them again to prevent erosion, or to pay for cleaning up damage from unnecessary flooding, or to install special water treatment capacity to purify water, or to find water storage structures made ineffective because of excessive siltation.

Past statutory actions may have been to blame for many institutionalized malpractices related to soil and water. As these statutes are changed to remove inconsistencies, some consideration should be given to a redress or losses potentially sustained. This has been done in other parts of our economy in certain cases. One device used has been called "grand-fathering". In farming, this might call for application of restraints when a change in the firm takes place, for example, when ownership passes from one to another, when the size of the unit is changed, when the unit organization or membership changes, when enterprise mixes are changed significantly, when land use changes are made, et cetera. These would lessen the cost to the Government and not interfere with an individual's status quo without prior individual or firm initiative. Conformity to erosion control through cross-compliance under a system such as this would be virtually complete in 40 years.

CONCLUSIONS

First, from the ISU-card analyses for the RCA evaluation, it would appear that an enlarged and more active national soil conservation program should be put into effect. The RCA process should be continued but its findings should be implemented as a national program. A national program is needed because of the interaction among regions and States of this country. Some aspects of soil conservation programs can be left to States and local governments. However, large-scale programs of the type needed to preserve productivity of U.S. land resources cannot be handled by State or local governments.

Second, some regions of highly erosive soils for example, western Iowa, western Tennessee, and the Palouse area of Washington, require special consideration. The productivity hazards of soil erosion on these soils cannot be controlled solely by conservation tillage. Adequate control of erosion in these areas can be attained only with the use of contouring, strip cropping and terracing—practices which in many instances are not profitable to individual farmers. Society's conservation goals can be best attained in these cases by subsidies and cost sharing by the Government which causes these practices to be economic for farmers. These costs should be borne by the Federal Government—rather than by States, local governments and individual farmers.

Third, the "targeting" of expenditures and resources for soil and water conservation should be extended and applied more vigorously. Historically, expenditures on soil conservation have been allocated nearly similarly; level areas with no important erosion problem received as many resources as did areas of fragile soils with severe erosion problems. Radical changes should be made in the allocation of these resources. Expenditures and technical assistance should be shifted from areas without an erosion hazard and concentrated in land areas where erosion is severe.

Fourth, economic analyses indicate that future productivity of U.S. agriculture will be great enough that we have the capacity to conserve our fragile lands (when cultivated) while producing food abundantly for domestic use and export. Exports can increase by as much as 3 percent per year up to the year 2000 through productivity growth from new technology and conversion of some of the 121 million acres of land identified in the USDA's 1977 national resource inventory to crops.

Fifth, some very effective conservation practices such as conservation tillage are profitable to farmers over the long run. In studies covering all major land resource areas of Iowa, conservation tillage was found to be a profitable practice on both owner and rented farms once ownership of appropriate machinery is attained. Hence, in the interests of both farmers and society, cross-compliance should be strongly implemented for conservation tillage in relation to all other public programs. Conservation tillage practices should be required in areas where it is relevant if land owners participate in public programs which provide them credit, price supports, commodity loans, or direct payments for supply control activities. For farmers with major investments in conventional tillage machinery which will last some time until fully depreciated, publicly acquired conservation tillage equipment should be made available for farmer use.

I'm sorry for exceeding any time.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Lee. Michael Dunn, you're next here.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL DUNN, PRODUCTION CREDIT ASSOCIATION OF IOWA, BETTENDORF, IOWA

Mr. DUNN. I am Michael Dunn with the Eastern Iowa Production Credit Association. I'm speaking on behalf of the Production Credit Association of Iowa. There are a total of 16 production credit associations in Iowa and they are currently serving 11,000 Iowa farmer members with nearly $1.2 billion in credit for their operating, livestock, machinery, and other short-term and intermediate credit needs.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this subcommittee to discuss the availability of financing for conservation purposes. We at the production credit association provide short—usually 1 year—and intermediate loans for all needs of the farm family. That would include livestock, operating expenses, machinery, and improvements and conservation practices.

This year we are celebrating our 50th year of operation. Our lending activities are designed to assist our member borrowers to ensure a long-term return from this land. We are now serving third and even fourth generation farmers. One thing that has been consistent from these members is a desire to leave productive viable farms to the next generation.

Over the years the Government cost-sharing programs have been a great incentive for implementing conservation measures on private land. Many times the cost of conservation measures will not pencil out without the Government programs. Soil conservation is a long-term investment that may pay back very slowly. It costs a great deal for tiling, terracing, waterways, and ponds. In today's agricultural economic environment the emphasis is not on conservation but rather survival. With high production costs, high interest rates and low commodity prices many farmers are not granted the luxury of implementing long-term conservation practices. Instead, they are in a struggle for their very economic survival.

They will survive and times will again be good on the farm. However, the land itself could face some irreversible damages in the interim. As conservation practices are sacrificed in order to meet annual financial obligations both men and land will be stretched to their limits. This is not a time to pull back on America's commitment to conservation and preservation practices. If tax and financial incentives are not attractive, the investment in soil conservation will be postponed until a later more prosperous time. We might however, be shutting the barn door after the horse has escaped. Past conservation practices have proven to be effective in reducing and even stopping soil losses. It is certainly in the best interest of the Nation for us to preserve our precious natural resources. And what more precious resources do we have than the land that grows the food and fiber for the Nation. It is our very strength. Not only will the Nation preserve its riches through conservation practices, we also will be saving a great deal of tax dollars in keeping drainage ditches cleared, keeping our waterways free from silting, and overall environmental protection. We at the production credit associations stand ready, willing, and able to help whenever financially feasible to help finance conservation practices. However, we need a strong partner in this commitment to preserve the soil and that is the U.S. Government. We thank you for your time at this hearing.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Dr. Vivian Jennings, associate dean, University Extension of the Iowa State University, proceed.

STATEMENT OF DR. VIVIAN JENNINGS, ASSOCIATE DEAN, UNIVERSITY EXTENSION, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, AMES, IOWA

Dr. **Jennings**. Soil conservation is of major importance in Iowa, where more than 75 percent of the land is used for agriculture. Much of the prosperity enjoyed by Iowans depends upon their ability to maintain and improve the productivity of their soil resources. Moreover, good soil conservation can prevent or minimize the movement of sediment, plant nutrients and pesticides into surface and ground waters. Thus, soil conservation efforts have two complementary benefits; that of sustained productivity and that of water quality improvement.

The need for improvement in and acceleration of soil conservation programs to effectively reduce soil erosion by wind and water is recognized by many rural and urban citizens. Farmers have been concerned about the problem for many years. Urbanities are concerned, too, since our soil resource is the base for our present and future food supply, and for various environmental quality reasons. Unfortunately, concern, alone, is not enough to bring about needed changes. Concern must be translated into action at the grassroots level. This translation can best come about through educational, incentive, and legislative initiatives that will lead to the voluntary adoption of conservation measures that are technically sound, economically feasible, and socially acceptable. Objectives of the new national soil and water conservation program resulting from the Soil and Water Resource Conservation Act of 1977 [RCA] effort address this concept. The national program will strengthen the role of existing local agencies and organizations. Conservation programs developed at local and state levels will form the basis for activities carried out through the national program. Because the application of soil conservation measures is a continuing effort, and not a one-time occurrence, care must be exercised such that targeting initiatives be taken so as not to jeopardize the effectiveness of existing conservation activities in nontargeted areas. Furthermore, for the program to be effective, the need for continuing investments in research, development, and transfer of soil conservation technology must be met. But again, not at the expenses of ongoing programs.

Technology transfer to the ultimate user, the landowner, is a critical component of the national program. At the Federal level the Cooperative Extension Service has recently affirmed as one of its highest goals to "help individuals and groups decide on wise use and management of the Nation's natural resources." SCS Chief Peter Myers recently commented:

> Extension has been an excellent conservation partner because of its close ties with State agricultural experiment stations; a dedicated corps of soil and water management specialists; agents in every county who have the trust and confidence of many farmers and ranchers; well-established lines of communications through radio, television, newspapers and other media; and experience in organizing successful meetings, demonstrations and other educational events.

The Cooperative Extension Service is in place as the information delivery arm of USDA. In Iowa, the Cooperative Extension Service is the informal, off-campus arm of Iowa State University responsible for dissemination among the people of Iowa useful and practical information on agriculture, home economics, and related subjects. It is present in every county, supported by specialists in 12 area offices and on the central staff in Ames. Essentially, extension's role is to extend research results to the people of Iowa to help them solve their problems.

Extension has a long history of involvement in the development and implementation of what we believe to be an effective soil conservation district program in Iowa. Most of these involvements have been joint undertakings with other agencies and organizations. Extension has taken and will continue to take a leadership role for the educational components of the program. Soil conservation is a major thrust of extension programing at both State and county levels.

Prior to 1940, extension staff were assigned to multicounty positions for purposes of developing soil conservation extension programs. These positions were the forerunners of the present day corps of area extension crop production specialists. Extension staff at State and county levels played a significnat role in the organization and development of soil conservation districts in all counties of Iowa during the period of 1940–53. In many instances, county extension directors served—and some still do—as secretary to the district. In the past 25 years or more, extension has placed emphasis on soil erosion and its control through conservation tillage, terraces, contouring, strip-cropping and other conservation practices. In addition, extension staff have exercised aggressive leadership in the educational aspects of the cooperative soil survey. In these efforts, soil conservation is considered an integral part of the total resource management system, rather than as an independent entity. Soil conservation concerns thus becomes interdisciplinary, involving agronomy, climatology, agricultural engineering, entomology, plant pathology, weed science, seed science, economics, forestry, and sociology.

Of the various management practices for soil erosion control and environmental quality enhancement, conservation tillage is considered to be the single most effective and least costly. For this reason much of the current soil conservation related activities revolve around conservation tillage.

The first significant extension efforts with conservation tillage closely followed the research efforts of George Browning prior to 1940. The adoption rate of these early systems was slow. In the past 15 years, adoption has been much more rapid because of the development and availability of important related technology including relatively low-cost nitrogen fertilizers, effective pesticides, improved planting and tillage equipment, and crop cultivars that respond favorably to the changed microenvironment created under conservation tillage. Extension continues to provide, in cooperation with its Federal, State and local partners, programs to encourage the adoption of this practice. Through meetings, field days, demonstrations, individual contact, print and broadcast media releases, publications, current information about this technology is being provided to a diverse clientele.

The adoption of concepts inherent in conservation tillage is the most significant development in soil conservation in over 4 decades. It will continue to grow for conservation tillage is a soil conservation practice that today has a high degree of farmer acceptance. The adoption rate will be accelerated as educational efforts are intensified in response to the availability of additional research data related to soil fertility and nutrient uptake, stand establishment, past management, sediment delivery and the economics of the usage of conservation tillage. To this end an interdisciplinary team of Federal and State scientists are engaged in a comprehensive, broadbased research effort to generate needed information. Ultimate adoption of conservation tillage and other proven conservation measures by all farmers is of paramount importance as erosion control practices are of no effect until they are applied to the land. The national soil and water conservation program contains provisions that will enable this technology transfer to be implemented within physical, economic, political, social and institutional constraints. Thank you very much.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you, Doctor Jennings. Jim, all of the things that the record should show that there are 26 counties in Iowa that have benefited rather dramatically from soil participation and targeting, and I think Hunk did that.

Jim Gulliford, you brought up something in addition to reinforcing the need for long-term policy which has been alluded to by a number of people here this morning, I think you're 100 percent on target. You mentioned incentives for better conservation. You also touched on rewards or some kind of recognition for the producer who is farming throughout the years and raising a family and really applied and paid for the real conservation practices. We can't overload them. How might we reward them? Should they be rewarded with recognition, money, publicity—what can we do to say thank you to these farmers who live in Iowa generation after generation and have paid the bill with or without Federal participation and have conserved their soils? What can we do besides giving them a big round of applause?

Mr. **Gulliford**. That's a very difficult problem. As you would suspect, they have already enjoyed the fruits of the effort they have made. They look at their land with some satisfaction. The frustration, I think, on their part is when they see their nonconservation neighbor or other farmers receiving additional incentives that they are not allowed to take because they've had their land in proper use for years—if there was a way that we could make these programs responsive—and it's a difficult task—we always seem to try and do what we can and bring the nonconservation farmer along and we forget, it seems, the conservation farmer.

Senator **Jepsen**. So, in the farm programs—farm policy—the old axiomatic where the squeeky wheel gets the grease or the person with the problem gets the grease—so to speak—and those that are paying the bill and doing the job sort of in the rulemaking and commodity program have not been recognized, and there might be some way that we can recognize them as we develop these policies. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. **Gulliford**. Yes, Senator.

Senator **Jepsen**. Good point. Thank you.

Pete, do you have any comments?

Mr. **Myers**. No, I think just from the remarks here that it's obvious that everyone is working as a team. I think that's the critical problem that we have. I guess what Don said about the program is good, it's solid, but it needs some modification.

Senator **Jepsen**. I would like to advise all of the participants that they'll be contacted by letter and will be asked to submit back to us their opinions and recommendations with regard to the following questions—one of which I will ask this panel to respond to with a yes or no in a few minutes.

Those questions are: In your opinion, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Now, I know you've answered it—some of you a little bit—but I'd like you to answer it yes or no, but in addition to that if you do say yes, would you please tell us how you see conservation being integrated with the production incentive program? Tell us how you think it should be done, and then add one further dimension and that is what sort of incentive do you think would lead the producers and farmers and landowners to apply conservation practice on their land?

So, if you say yes, let's have some—let's not continue to subsidize misuse of the soil through farm programs, I believe we should have something that would require water and soil conservation programs in the Federal commodity support program. And as we divide these programs, just how can we integrate that conservation, and include also how do you expect to enforce it; and then finally list, if you would, please, the sort of incentives that you think would help to lead landowers, farmers and producers to apply conservation practices.

I think embodied in those three or four questions are the nuts and bolts that we really have got to look at to get soil conservation moving. We have got all kinds of studies, and we've got the RCA and we're redoing that, and we're here holding hearings on it, but when it comes down to a committee staff putting together legislation for the USDA or Pete and his department laying out some rules and some policies, that's where the rubber hits the road and you've got a pitch or cut date and you come up with something that gets action.

And embodied in these four questions is how you do it. So, with that in mind, I want to ask all of our four panels before we conclude here for lunch your opinion: Should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to support soil and water conservation programs? Jim Meimann, yes or no?

Mr. **Meimann**. Yes, in terms of tillage practices. When you get to structures, then——

Senator **Jepsen**. So, you're saying yes and no?

Mr. **Meimann**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. If I could just get you to say one or the other—I know it's difficult. OK. Jim Meimann says yes or no. Jim Gullliford, yes or no, what do you say?

Mr. **Gulliford**. I'm going to say yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Hunk.

Mr. **Anderson**. Yes, with reservations.

Senator **Jepsen**. All right. Don?

Mr. **Johnson**. I'm going to say yes with reservations.

Senator **Jepsen**. Lee Kolmer.

Mr. **Kolmer**. Generally, yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Generally, yes. We're getting a little more sophisticated as we get up into the colleges and universities. Pete says you can tell that they work for an agency of the Government. Michael Dunn?

Mr. **Dunn**. That presumes that the underlying misison of the USDA is for conservation, and I don't think that is the underlying mission, and I would say no. Conversely, I would say that those that affect other privately held lands or public lands due to the poor practices should be assessed damages in cleaning up those messes they make.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Did he say no or yes?

Mr. **Myers**. He said no.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Doctor Jennings?

Dr. **Jennings**. I would have to indicate a qualified yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. A qualified yes, a general yes, yes or no, and two yeses with exceptions and a no, but Lee?

Mr. **Kolmer**. I think the response reflect the fact that this is a very difficult and complex thing. It looks simple on the surface, but when you get down into it, it's extremely complex and I think it is for some of us, for example, conservation tillage, it is easy to say yes because it is there, but for some of the other things it is very difficult to make the assessment.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, let me try one more thing because I bet you a new hat that I can get a yes from all of you if I asked it this way:

In your opinion, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to enhance soil and water conservation programs?

[Joint reply: yes.]

Senator **Jepsen**. We'll now recess. This afternoon, we have two additional panels, and the panels this morning have been tremendous—very stimulating—and this afternoon we have a continuation of this quality of testimony with presidents of a number of the commodity associations, the Iowa Corn Growers, the Iowa Soybean Association, the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, and the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association. We'll also be hearing from the Women Involved in Farm Economics with two representatives, including the president of the organization. The Iowa Farm Bureau, the Iowa League of Women Voters, the National Catholic Rural Life Council, District Soil Commissioners, and Dave Williams, a farmer—as many of these other folks are, by the way.

I wanted to do that to whet your appetite hoping you'll stay and join us this afternoon. I have been told that the motel restaurant has a very fine buffet line and is open during the noon break, and it is now 12:39 and we'll reconvene at 1:30.

[Lunch recess was held.]

Senator **Jepsen**. Subcommittee will come to order. While we're assembling, I would ask that the following people please come to the witness table—Russ Christensen of the Iowa Cattlemen's Association; Dan Stadmueller, president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association; Raymond Heck, president of the Iowa Soybean Association; JoAnne Neuzil, Women Involved in Farm Economics; Wendy Mitchell, president of the Women Involved in Farm Economics; Larry Wilson, director of Iowa Conservation Committee; Kenneth Rasch, executive secretary of the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association; and Dean Bohle, president of the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association.

While they're coming forward, I'd like to introduce Dan Chargo, who is the president of the Iowa State Student Chapter of the Conservation Society of America and is currently an intern at the department of conservation. Are you here, Dan Chargo? Will you stand, Dan? What school are you attending?

Mr. **Chargo**. Iowa State.

Senator **Jespen**. Iowa State. And you're presently an intern at the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation, and you are president of the Iowa State Student's Chapter of Soil Conservation of America?

Mr. **Chargo**. That's right, Senator.

Senator **Jespen**. Welcome. Good luck. Thanks for coming. I hope you'll have a remark or two when we finish here. You might be thinking about it.

OK. Dan Stadtmueller, president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association, welcome. Dan said he had all of his crops in. They're all up. Corn is not quite knee-high yet, but coming, and you are a minimum till or no till farmer?

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. Ridge till farmer?

Senator **Jespen**. A ridge till?

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. Yeah.

Senator **Jespen**. Save toil, oil, and soil. I used that down in Kentucky and the folks never heard of it before, and they said, gee, that's really something: Save toil, oil, and soil—because they were talking about minimum till and they've got a big project there in the west part of Kentucky and minimum till and they're really excited about it. So, I said, "Do you know what minimum and no till does? It saves oil, toil, and soil."

It made kind of a big hit. Somebody here in Iowa gave that to me 4 years ago; so, it's not old. Well, Dan, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF DAN STADTMUELLER, PRESIDENT, IOWA CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION, MONTICELLO, IOWA

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. Good afternoon. My name is Dan Stadtmueller and I'm a corn and soybean producer near Monticello. Currently, I'm serving as president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association, and I'm here today representing corn growers and members from around the State.

I would like to address the topic of discussions perhaps in somewhat of a different perspective than what most may choose to do. I believe in the free market philosophy and support practices that allow freedom of choice to exist with producers. The ability to succeed—or in the case of production agriculture the ability to generate a profit—is perhaps the greatest incentive a producer can be offered to gain in acceptance and adoption of a proven practice.

Such a freedom of choice can be implemented into our soil conservation programs.

I currently utilize this philosophy on my own farm and soil conservation program. That is, I farm in a cost-cutting efficient manner that has a side benefit of soil erosion control. By utilizing soil conservation such as minimum or reduced tillage coupled with other cost-saving techniques, farmers will soon realize it is not only beneficial to their soil, but also their pocketbooks to implement such programs.

Far too often, we place too much emphasis on the need for adoption of more soil conservation practices and actually not mention one of the primary reasons for doing so—cost savings.

Last year in the State of Iowa we saw a 55-percent increase in the number of farmers trying this no till way of farming. Yet, that's less than 5 percent of the State's farmers using no till. We are also seeing and increased number of acres that are being farmed utilizing a reduced tillage method—currently, 75 percent of the row crop land in the State.

Fortunately, farmers are learning to manage their crop residues and gain the financial and conservation benefits of these practices.

The Iowa Corn Growers Association supports increased emphasis on soil conservation and encourages all governmental agencies to continue existing efforts as well as new ones which will allow farmers to readily adapt practices. We feel a continuation of existing programs of voluntary cooperation of landowners and farmers while at the same time providing increased financial and tax incentives for operators is a key to successful soil conservation programs.

We, in the Corn Growers Association, would be able to support a properly cross-compliance program. I also support the targeting concept for the placing of a greater proportion of moneys for conservation programs in areas where most needed. Currently, a number of Iowa counties are benefiting from this procedure. They are receiving additional funds in order to implement soil conservation programs. It is my understanding that proportions of the eastern United States are receiving cost-sharing funding for practices that will be implemented in areas where soil loss is below the tolerable level or T level. Hopefully, more of these funds could be redirected to higher priority areas where they can be used more effectively and efficiently.

For my final point, I would like to urge that a greater portion of SCS funds be directed to technical assistance—especially in the reduced tillage area and away from cost-sharing of permanent practices. Most permanent practices, such as terraces--while very effective in themselves--save very little soil per dollars expended.

In conclusion, I would encourage the subcommittee to focus on the most efficient and effective methods of conserving soil for each dollar spent. Thank you.

Senator **Jespen**. Thank you, Dan. Russ Christensen of the Iowa Cattlemen's Association. I know that you have come a ways, Russ, to be with us here today, and I know that you have worked very hard preparing your presentation—someone advised me of that. I welcome you here and am looking forward to hearing from you. Proceed.

STATEMENT OF RUSSELL CHRISTENSEN, PRESIDENT, IOWA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION, AMES, IOWA

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you. My name is Russell Christensen.[1] I am a farmer and cattle feeder from Royal, Iowa. Currently I am serving as president of the Iowa Cattlemen's Association. I welcome the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of the over 15,250 members of our association.

If we were to conduct a study to identify the major agricultural problems in the United States and could exclude low commodity prices and high interest rates, soil erosion would rank near or at the top of the list. We are learning a great deal about the magnitude of this problem, and are making progress in implementing farming practices that minimize the loss of our topsoil. Escalated progress must be made.

Perhaps you are wondering why an association of cattle producers such as the Iowa Cattlemen's Association is testifying at this subcommittee hearing on soil erosion. What's the connection between beef production and conserving our soil? There is a very direct link, and I would like to discuss this often ignored link with you today.

The ruminant animal has the unique ability to convert grasses and forages to a high quality edible protein. It all begins with a beef cow that goes through a 9-month gestation period and gives birth to a calf. Then she produces milk to nourish the calf until it is weaned, weighing, perhaps, 500 pounds. From conception to birth to weaning, the cow and calf live primarily on grasses and forages. The beef animal is acutally a solar converter; converting grasses and forages and other crop residues produced by soil, rain, and sun into high quality protein. Nonruminants (including man) cannot make this conversion. Then the 500 pound calf enters the feedlot and is fed to a finished weight of 1,000 to 1,200 pounds, the major quantity of the ration still is hay, haylage, silage or another forage equivalent.

The beauty of all this is that the majority, if not all, of the forages and grasses utilized by beef cattle can be produced on marginal acres. It is an accepted fact that far too many acres of severely sloping land are being cultivated for row crop production. Conservation tillage, no till farming, contouring, terracing, strip cropping, et cetera, can help reduce soil losses. However, if we make a realistic assessment of the situation, the only solution to controlling erosion on some of these acres is converting them back to grasses, forages, or other soil-conserving crops. The production from these acres can only be utilized by ruminant animals. So, the beef animal does play a key role in soil conservation, probably a far more important role than has been acknowledged.

Maybe this sounds too simple. If our analysis is correct, why aren't our hillsides covered with cattle-grazing grasses and forages? The economy in the beef business, particularly for cow-calf producers, hasn't encouraged expansion and we've again gone through a liquidation phase of the cattle cycle. That's our problem and we have to deal with it through promotional and educational programs that will develop an increased demand for beef. There is little that the Government can do other than strengthening the economy which will benefit the beef and practically all other industries.

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[1] See p. 404 for an attachment to the statement of Mr. Christensen.

The beef industry is not asking for Government subsidies to our industry. We don't want them. At the same time, we do not want to be discriminated against. Recent Federal farm programs, of which the Iowa Cattlemen's Association would rather do without, directly discriminate against beef producers and thus discourage a natural soil conservation tool.

Most cattle feeders and producers raise crops other than feed grains on some of their tillable acres. Primarily these are forage, grass, and small grain crops to produce feedstuffs for their cattle. We could debate whether this is done primarily for economic or conservation purposes. The fact remains that the cattle producer raises soil-conserving crops that have both a long- and short-term impact on helping conserve our topsoil. This is done without public funding. Yes, without tax dollars. If soil conservation is to be encouraged, you, the decisionmakers, should insure that Federal farm programs promote rather than discourage voluntary soil conservation measures.

In the Federal farm program a feed grain or corn base is established on each farm unit. This is determined by previous cropping history. A farmer that has planted every available acre to corn over the last 2 years receives a corn base equal to his average corn acreage of the previous 2 years. This occurs even if a portion of his acreage is not entirely suitable for corn production and is subject to erosion. The cattle producer who is utilizing some of his acreage for other than corn production receives a much smaller corn base if he has not grown corn on his marginial acres. This discourages cattle producers from participating in farm programs and encourages them to plow up their forage or pasture acres so that in the future they, too, will receive a large corn base and be eligible for Government handouts of grain and payments. Why should others be paid a premium to do what the cattle producer has been doing voluntarily? Farm programs should encourage farmers not producing soil-conserving crops to do so rather than discouraging those who do raise soil-conserving crops to discontinue this practice.

There are alternatives. The Iowa Cattlemen's Association has developed a background paper (see attachment No. 1) offering a unique alternative allowing for partial credit based on TDN [total digestible nutrients] to be given to forages toward a corn base. I hope you will refer to the specifics of this concept.

Farm programs have placed livestock feeders at other disadvantages. If a portion of the grain produced on a farm is fed, it is almost impossible to prove a yield higher than what was assigned to that farm. Cash grain producers can do this, and the assigned yield disparities widen. Under the present system, there are no loan provisions for corn silage. Again, the cattle producer is placed at a disadvantage.

An industry that produces a high quality, nutritious, edible protein and conserves our soil while creating numerous jobs in the packing, processing, transportation, and many other industries is pushed aside. The USDA's farm programs seem more concerned about storage fees and interest expense on reserve grain and how to dispose of it through PIK or foreign markets rather than recognizing that a strong domestic beef industry can employ American workers, allow us to export a processed product, and conserve our Nation's precious soil and water resources.

The Iowa Cattlemen's Association believes that the beef industry just might be the best soil conservation tool available. It is your responsibility to determine if this is true. If you agree with us, Federal farm programs and, perhaps, other soil and water conservation programs may need a new focus.

At the 1982 Iowa State Fair, the Iowa Cattlemen's Association and the Iowa Beef Industry Council had a joint display portraying the beef industry as a soil conserver. The display was entitled, "The Grass Grazing, Soil Saving, Ruminant Protein Factory." If the managers of this ruminant factory could keep it in full production. Our soil-erosion problems would not disappear, but they could be reduced without relying on public funding. You can help insure that this factory remains productive. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Ray Heck, president of the Iowa Soybean Association—welcome, Ray, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF RAYMOND HECK, PRESIDENT, IOWA SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION, PERRY, IOWA

Mr. **Heck**. Well, before I start, I just want to say that Russell made a point that I think should be reemphasized, and that is that when you get to your proven yields, the cattlemen are getting an unfair shake. I have proposed to different people—and I hope sometime somebody pays attention to it—that any time a certain percent of the county comes in and proves their yield was higher and it's evident that the yields are too low—they should adjust everyone's—not just the guy that is coming in and proving his. I happen to be one of those that's in the top, and I don't think it's right that for the same type of land, that I can draw 25 bushels more per acre payment in kind than my neighbor that raises just as much as I do, but can't prove it.

So, with that, I'll go with what I was going to say. My name is Raymond Heck, current president of the Iowa Soybean Association. My corn and soybean farm is located in Boone County, near Perry, Iowa.

We recognize all agricultural productivity is dependent upon our soil and water resources. Conservation of these resources is essential to the future productivity and profitability of American agriculture in general, and the soybean industry in particular.

We believe the individual State and local soil and water conservation authorities are best qualified to plan and implement necessary programs for conservation of our soil and water resources.

ISA urges that any regulation involving water and/or soil conservation include associated programs that will provide the landowner with sufficient incentive to gain his involvement and goodwill toward accomplishing such goals. Public funding for conservation practices should be derived from sources—Federal, State, or local—other than property taxes.

ISA supports research and education programs for proper tillage practices and encourages soybean farmers to participate and work with local soil conservation services to implement good soil and water conservation.

We recognize that farmers were among the first to show concern for, and practice, the use of conservation. We urge continued effort to foster greater use of conserving management practices by soybean farmers, continuation of the ACP program, and to educate the public on the successful conservation achievements of the soybean industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to make our association position known.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Now, Dean—how do you pronounce your last name?

Mr. **Bohle**. Bohle.

Senator **Jepsen**. Dean Bohle, president of the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association, welcome, Dean.

STATEMENT OF DEAN BOHLE, PRESIDENT, IOWA LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, KINGSLEY, IOWA

Mr. **Bohle**. Thank you, Senator, for the opportunity to testify here today. Being contractors we are dedicated to saving our soil and water, we are greatly interested in these matters.

The need for a total conservation program has been made very evident in Iowa the past few years with the extreme weather conditions—such as very dry which depletes subsoil moisture and heavy local downpours that create excessive runoff and erosion, causing high losses of topsoil—as high as 200 tons per acre—and rilling of slopes. The damage caused by these storms prove that neither conservation tillage or terracing can do the job alone. But a combination of both can prove effective; therefore, the need for a total conservation program.

With increased compaction from large equipment the need for terraces is so important as retention basins for the many chemicals applied to farmland. Without terraces we are contaminating our streams, lakes, and oceans. It has been reported that as much as 50 percent of the chemicals run off. The terraces will hold them on the ground where they are applied.

The Resources Conservation Act has positive steps in the right direction to achieve the goals set forth. But conservation is an ongoing project and cannot be done in a few years, when we have hardly scratched the surface with the programs that we have had 50 years.

I believe that the targeting program can work and is working in western Iowa. However, the need for administrating the program needs to be more cost effective. By this, I think the Soil Conservation Service needs to look at the most effective system and layout that can obtain the desired results for the dollar invested. Also, proper supervision of personnel in the field could be improved to create a better end product. It seems that the technical assistance cost is high for the amount of work that is placed on the land. The funding of technical assistance according to fiscal year 1984 conservation budget will remain constant, while conservation programs would be cut 30 percent or $41 million dollars. I believe this needs further study. If programs are cut I question the rising need for technical assistance (refer to charts in fiscal year 1984 budget report).

It is good for the individual States to assume more responsibility for their conservation needs. Anytime the control is put in the hands of people close to the source of the problem, it can be handled more effectively. Our State has its own program of cost sharing which has worked well and is implementing more to help farmers along this line. Iowa has been a leader in the Resources Conservation Act and has machinery ready to put it into action. Thinking of further generations, I have trouble seeing how Congress can cut this fund 6 percent and increase the handouts and expect this country to maintain its well-being by letting our most precious resource to deplete.

It is imperative that the administration and USDA require all other departments to abide by conservation practices for the best interest of our Nation. We cannot be pulling in opposite directions and expect to come out a winner. We must be concerned about use of our prime farmland to build homes, factories, and shopping centers on. This also depletes our valuable natural resources.

Farmers should be expected to have an active conservation plan to obtain assistance in all USDA programs. This is another piece of the total picture and, without it, it will fall apart. With the use of larger, heavier equipment and the increased use of herbicides and insecticides—I feel that water quality is of utmost importance. We need to look at soil compaction as a real problem, which can make a real difference in the runoff of our land.

The replanting of our forests is also important where they are cleared so that the ground cover can be maintained to break the raindrop and slow erosion. Also, trees remove many impurities from the air. A real reason for promoting the forestry program.

In summary, if the United States of America meets the challenge and saves our most precious resource, our land, we can continue to be a leader of nations and help to feed many hungry people.

We thank you for allowing our association to appear at this hearing today and we offer you our continued support.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Thank you, Dean Bohle. Kenneth Rasch, executive secretary of the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association—welcome, proceed.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH RASCH, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, IOWA LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, FORT DODGE, IOWA

Mr. **RASCH**. Thank you, Senator, for inviting us to be here today. I was born on a farm and have lived there all my life, and have been a contractor for 36 years and have spent about the last 18 years working in the association. We feel that the PIK program is good in that it's going to be a big help to soil conservation contractors. We have learned that it is hard to be efficient in building terraces early in the spring when it's so wet the farmers can't get into the fields with a four-wheel-drive machine. With PIK, we are now able to plan our work when the soil works better and we can practice fuel conservation through lower rolling resistance. We need total water management programs—keep the raindrop where it falls—cause the raindrop to enter the soil profile and move vertically down. We see soil compaction which is caused by our farming practices to be a major problem just as it is for us with our heavy earth moving equipment as we go about building terraces.

We must compact—squeeze the air out of the soil in structures like terraces to help them hold water. Soil compaction shows up in other ways and our contractors are called out to farms showing standing water to fix the tile. Many times we find the tiling in good condition; however, the water cannot make its way down to the tile line.

We need to manage our soil so as to improve its ability to hold water. This will cut down on the amount of our valuable fertilizers and chemicals that are carried away by water moving laterally.

We look forward to the idea of a PIK for conservation for the long-term program—something like S-843. LICA has worked hard to establish the national endowment for soil and water conservation. We place very little value on the things that come to us free—like our air and water—and yet 95 percent of the weight of a growing plant is air and water.

We build terraces to hold topsoil and water. Thank you very much.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Ken. Larry Wilson, director of the Iowa Conservation Committee—welcome, Larry. You may proceed.

Mr. **Fagerland**. First of all, my name is Bob Fagerland. I want to apologize for Director Wilson. He could not be here this afternoon as an emergency came up this morning.

Senator **Jepsen**. How do you spell your last name?

Mr. **Fagerland**. F-a-g-e-r-l-a-n-d.

Senator **Jepsen**. Proceed, Bob.

STATEMENT OF BOB FAGERLAND, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF LARRY WILSON, DIRECTOR, IOWA STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mr. **Fagerland**. I have a short statement that I wish to read that Director Wilson has prepared.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to attend this hearing and present the following comments on behalf of the Iowa State Conservation Commission. The Iowa State Commission is a many-faceted resource agency primarily involved in the areas of forestry, parks, fisheries, and wildlife. Soil erosion is of primary concern to the Iowa Conservation Commission because of its negative influence on water quality for recreational purposes within the State of Iowa. Soil erosion can harm fish and wildlife habitat and reduce recreational opportunity in the lakes and streams of Iowa. We feel that it is important for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to target additional programs to areas with the biggest soil erosion problems and support the concept of targeting soil conservation efforts. We feel one of the priorities in addition to targeting of broad areas of soil erosion problems is targeting of special soil erosion problems above public owned or managed bodies of water such as natural and artificial lakes. However, all of this targeting of soil conservation efforts will not solve the problem unless the dollars necessary to solve the problem are attached to those programs.

The Iowa Conservation Commission applauds the proposal in the 1982 final program report concerning the RCA for greater consistency between U.S. Department of Agriculture programs and conservation objectives. All too often it appears that one branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is doing one thing that will reduce soil erosion and another branch is doing something that is detrimental to the soil erosion abatement effort.

Also, we are pleased to see the increased emphasis proposed in the RCA report for conservation tillage systems and long-term agreements. Soil conservation measures must be tied to long-term objectives rather than short-term quick-fix solutions.

If I might digress just for a moment from the prepared statement, I want to reiterate that last statement. Long-range programs are what we believe are the most important, and when I speak of that I'm speaking of 5 years as a minimum. I realize that you have budgetary problems and some other problems, but 1- and 2-year programs are not that effective from a wildlife standpoint for the simple reason that it takes a year or two to start showing results.

Lastly, I want to emphasize the need for financial support from the administration and Congress for the proposed RCA programs. All the plans and programs in the world will lead to small accomplishments unless the financial resources are provided to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry forward the program that is outlined.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing us to make these statements.

Senator JEPSEN. Mr. Fagerland, you've heard about the provision that would allow the use of some of the PIK acres for wildlife and habitat development, haven't you?

Mr. FAGERLAND. Yes, sir. Yes, sir; that was a very good effort that was made by yourself and also the State committee where they delayed the clipping of some of these crops—a real bang-up thing, and we thank everyone that was involved in that.

Senator JEPSEN. I feel like when I ask the next question, it's kind of like the question, "Who's buried in Grant's tomb," but would your association be interested in seeing these acres set aside for wildlife feed and habitat purposes?

Mr. FAGERLAND. Yes, sir.

Senator JEPSEN. They were excellent statements. Dan, you've been a long-time pioneer and leader of minimum and no till. Do you feel that if equipment or no till equipment were made available and readily accessible to the farmer across the state as part of the soil conservation program here, that it would accelerate the participation and the willingness of some farmers to participate in it.

While you're getting the mike in position, I often hear—I have talked to some farmers and some farmers say, I wouldn't mind trying it, but you know, I've got a big investment in my equipment and I'm not about to buy any more equipment and I don't have the equipment to do it. I know that this is not new, in fact, in some parts of Iowa they have provided this equipment.

Do you think it should be increased?

Mr. STADTMUELLER. I have mixed feelings about this because I know that many farmers who have adopted this system tell me that every year they have saved $30 an acre, and now, on a sizable farm—or any size farm—that's a lot of money, and many times they have adopted attachments to their existing equipment. So, if you really get into it, it's very profitable. You don't need the financial assistance aspect. Although, probably, there are many producers who do feel that they need that type of aid, but my basic philosophy is that I don't know if it would help a whole lot to provide financial assistance in this area.

Senator **Jepsen**. I wasn't thinking of providing financial assistance—well, that would be a form of financial assistance—but to make the equipment available—in other words, to introduce, you know, the old moldboard plow is just kind of hard to let go of in more ways than one, and yet we find year after year a large increase. We're doing a lot better, more and more every year, 50 percent, I believe, we've increased in no till farming just in the year 1982 alone, although no till acreage is still small—it's 345,000 acres out of some 26 million or so in Iowa, but reduced tillage was practiced by 102,900 farmers in 16.4 million acres.

Now, that's making some real progress compared to what it was 4 years ago, but we really need, in my estimation, to pick up and reenforce and educate and give people—say, try it, you might like it. Here, it isn't going to cost you anything to try it because we have the equipment if you'll do it.

Mr. **Myers**. I want to ask you, Dan. Is your ridge tillage a form of modified no till?

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. That's right.

Mr. **Myers**. Were you planting it into old residue——

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. Yes.

Mr. **Myers** [continuing]. Without working the soil? OK. How much have your crop yields suffered in the last 5 years? How much have they gone down?

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. That's one of those misconceptions that I guess people have around the country is that they don't suffer at all. In fact, they're equally as good—if not better to what they were before. If you can just maintain the basic things; some fertilizers, good weed control, with a combination of some herbicides and cultivation to rebuild the ridge, why, we have had very good results and excellent yields.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you have any other forms of conservation on your farm?

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. Other farms in which manner, like, permanent?

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes.

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. We did have one field of terraces, and they weren't really adapted to that particular piece of ground. There wasn't enough topsoil. It took us many years for us to get that land into a state of productivity. So I've developed a bias, but not too positive on terraces because of what's happened to us on the farm. That farm was some miles away from our home base and last year, why, we solved the problem and sold the farm and bought one that's right next door.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, for my land development friends here, I want to say to you that we do practice minimum tillage and are moving more towards no till in our family farms, and we have a great number of terraces and are putting more in. In most instances—in many instances, it's a matter of the elevation of the land and the angle. I think we must be careful as we move into the no till that the people say oh, that's the total answer in all cases. It isn't. You've got to have permanent—it depends on the lay of the land as to whether or not you have terraces or not.

Mr. STADTMUELLER. There's several areas on my farm where we're going to install a doodle-dike or terrace-type structure——

Senator JEPSEN. What did you call it, a doodle-dike?

Mr. STADTMUELLER. Right, but it will just be an occasional one to compliment our tillage system.

Senator JEPSEN. OK. Russ, I know that the Cattlemen's Association folks are strong, independent, let us do our own thing type folks. I admire that. I also have had someone say. Couldn't we have some kind of payment-in-kind of an arrangement whereby because of the problems that you mentioned that they have to work out—some arrangements for certain payment-in-kind bushels of grain that they can feed to their cattle in reward, so to speak, or in recognition, or in compensation for taking the land under conservation cover which might otherwise be plowed up. Have you discussed that at all or has anyone discussed that with you?

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. I have discussed it as far as the cattlemen are concerned. We haven't developed any specific policy. I certainly believe that that deserves some special attention and it makes good sense. I would think that this should be explored as a possibility. I know these things very well, and what it's done to my growth income, and it really hurts to be a cattleman and participate in farm programs and yet have concerns about surplus, and I know that they affect the cattle industry and don't do any of us any good.

I think the one you just mentioned deserves attention.

Senator JEPSEN. Ray, soybeans kind of loosen the soil, don't they?

Mr. HECK. That's right.

Senator JEPSEN. And then a PIK program really isn't it a pretty good idea that if you have soybeans and you planted them one year to let the soil rest the next and planted the next year one or, how would you do that for the best of the soil as far as forgetting about erosion for a minute? What's the recommended rotation for soybeans?

Mr. HECK. In my own case, my recommendation would be what was beans last year, if you went to PIK and didn't have any corn to plant, use that for your PIK acres. In other words, not tilling it any more than you have to following the beans, and put your beans behind your corn just like the normal practice.

Senator JEPSEN. Well, what is the normal practice? Does that mean that you have a bean crop on a given piece of land every other year?

Mr. HECK. Right, 2-year rotation.

Senator JEPSEN. So that if you had that in the PIK program, you could just go in and put the acres that you had in beans which you're not going to have the beans anyway?

Mr. HECK. What was beans last year—did I?

Senator JEPSEN. No, I said, would you?

Mr. **Heck**. To go into the PIK program, I would have corn on ground that was beans in 1982. Well, this year, I would use those bean acres for my PIK acres because that's where the corn would have been growing anyway. I think it's better for the soil. Better for the crop yield.

Senator **Jepsen**. So, you're giving the soil a rest?

Mr. **Heck**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Now then, for conservation cover, is the bean stubble good enough to prevent erosion?

Mr. **Heck**. I think it's good enough if the ground isn't worked after the beans are harvested. The stubble is there and the bean straw and if it is not worked into the soil, then I think it's good enough.

Senator **Jepsen**. What are the PIK program administrators allowing in Iowa?

Mr. **Heck**. Well, I think it varies a little from county to county. I do manage one farm that was all beans last year and by some of the rules it was still allowed a 100-percent corn base; so, we went in 100 percent and we left that. We didn't touch it.

Senator **Jepsen**. The conservation cover is accepted?

Mr. **Heck**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. You didn't do anything to it at all?

Mr. **Heck**. Right. There's absolutely no wash-off on that farm, but it is pretty foul. There's no erosion at all that's happened on that farm this year.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you. Dean, in your opinion, should Federal commodity support programs be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Mr. **Bohle**. Yes, I think they should.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you have any special recommendations just on the tip of your tongue or immediately available how you see conservation being integrated into these production programs?

Mr. **Bohle**. I think the PIK program is ideal for conservation. Rather than working in the spring of the year and in the fall in the big rush, we're able to extend it out over the summer programs and help alleviate our work load and do a better job of putting terraces in when the ground is more fit.

Senator **Jepsen**. Either Dean or Ken or both of you can address this, if you want. I know you've given thought to it. What sort of incentive would lead farmers to apply soil conservation practices on their land? Tax incentives?

Mr. **Bohle**. I think the tax incentives would be good.

Senator **Jepsen**. I have yet to hear what I have heard in the past that one thing the farmer has to have is big pockets—believing they have money. That hasn't been the case for a while. Have you noticed, from being in the business, that it was that slow through conservation practices the last couple of years that it has slowed down? And I assume you deal primarily with what we call permanent conservation.

Mr. **Bohle**. Yes, in other areas of the State, I think that it has been a real problem. I happen to work over in western Iowa.

Senator **Jepsen**. One of the targeted areas?

Mr. **Bohle**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Business has been good?

Mr. **Bohle**. Yes, but over the rest of the State, I think it has been a problem.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you concur that as executive secretary of the association?

Mr. **Rasch**. I believe that this little crisis has taught us all a little bit more about the value of our basic researches—taking care of the land. In other words, at one time we built terraces and we would not insist on replacing the topsoil. Even though it may not look good, remember, it's better than anything else there is. And it's well worth taking it up, and we find that people are very receptive to this now because improperly built terraces can do more damage to the farm. We feel that the landowners and farmers are beginning to see the value in trying to manage the water—we've got to figure out the raindrops on this land up in there. If we could do that, we wouldn't have so much trouble downstream. When soil conservation first came out, we said, keep the raindrop where it falls.

Senator **Jepsen**. I remember that. That's a good thing. Mr. Fagerland, one of the things that we have to do in this country to move something along nationally, and I'd be very interested in your reaction, and I hope that you will do everything to inform your association membership of the potential possibilities for improving the lot of the wildlife and habitat development with Government farm programs.

We need to have the support of our city cousins who like to hunt—collectively across this Nation. That helps in Congress and in the agencies and administration and so on to farm and mold public opinion to support the conservation of soil.

For whatever the reason is, I'm interested in both educating and doing whatever public relations are necessary to encourage and induce people to support soil conservation and become aware of it. In this instance I felt that with the conservation people interested in wildlife and hunting and this type of thing, it is certainly a very big plus if they are properly informed and aware of what is going on. Are they, or have they been informed?

Mr. **Fagerland**. I think so, Senator. One of the things I'd like, and as you mentioned to one of the other gentlemen earlier, I'd like to reiterate the main point is that you have to demonstrate to the property owner that it is to the property owner's advantage to do it. A lot of people don't understand that maybe somebody doesn't care to have a lot of wildlife, because that means a lot of others coming around and bothering them, but we think that having a lot of wildlife is indication of fertile soil because the land that raises the most corn raises the most game.

We think it's very important that people in town should get the message that you have to figure out some way to appeal to that landowner—to convince him that this is to his advantage. In other words, that he's going to leave to his son or grandson a better farm than when he took it over.

Just to go out and sell wildlife isn't necessarily the thing that's going to do it. The point that you make is a very good one. We have to come up with plans and programs to do this. A few years ago an experiment with 7-inch beans provided the critical nesting cover that we needed in June and July, and the farmer will raise more beans while he's doing it.

Weed control.—I think that there's things that we can do to take care of that, but what we have to remember is when it gets to the farmer we have to do things that will be to his benefit—not just the people in town.

Senator **Jepsen**. What I heard you just say is that there was in fact some beans that were developed that had the best of all worlds. They were good for the wildlife and they were also good for the farmer.

Mr. **Fagerland**. That's correct. That have been experiments going on because it takes a different species for 7-inch beans then those in 40-inch rows.

Senator **Jepsen**. Was that done on a joint project of someone, or was it the result of soybean research? Who developed that?

Mr. **Fagerland**. Every State has at their land-grant university a wildlife unit that's been funded for a number of years by Congress that conduct experiments. That has been in jeopardy for funds. That is bascially where those things have been done. Through the land-grant universities and also fish and wildlife agencies throughout the States.

Senator **Jepsen**. That's a good plug. I'll put one in for the American Soybean Association. They have their PIK offices and have been very instrumental in providing funds for both universities and colleges for research development, and I think there's been a great interest on the part of conserving the soil—not only on the erosion basis, but on the nutrients of the soil till basis too. We hope to see a lot more of that in Iowa too.

I think all of you for appearing today, and I'd like to run real quickly across the panel—you've said it, but just give me, if we can, a yes or no. You heard the last panel which we got a lot of combinations, but in your opinion, starting with Dan, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs? Yes or no, Dan?

Mr. **Stadtmueller**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Russ.

Mr. **Christensen**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Ray.

Mr. **Heck**. No.

Senator **Jepsen**. Dean.

Mr. **Bohle**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Ken.

Mr. **Rasch**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Bob.

Mr. **Fagerland**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, gentlemen. We'll take about a 5-minute break between this panel and the next panel. The next panel will be Jerry Shepler, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation; Ben Kern, Iowa Farm Bureau; Ron Young, Iowa Farm Bureau; J. D. Armstrong, Association of General Contractors of America; Judie Hoffman, Iowa League of Women Voters; Father White, National Catholic Rural Life Council; Ralph Schnur, district soil commissioner, Story County; Dave Williams, farmer from Villisca, Iowa.

And Dave, I understand you have to leave early; so, we'll start with you, and do we have someone here from Colorado?

Mr. CURTIS. Yes.

Senator JEPSEN. What is your first name?

Mr. CURTIS. Ralph.

Senator JEPSEN. Ralph Curtis, you will also be on this panel. So, when we reassemble here, please come to the front table, and we'll be looking forward to hearing from you. We'll take that recess now.

[A brief recess was taken.]

Senator JEPSEN. If the committee will please come to order, we now have panel No. 4. If you will please introduce yourselves and whom you represent and be advised that any written statements that you have will be entered into the record and then you may summarize, if you so desire. Everything has been very interesting here today.

Dave Williams, I assume that you're No. 1 here. I assume that you have to get back to the farm in Villisca.

Mr. WILLIAMS. That's right.

Senator JEPSEN. Villisca, is that out here west just off the interstate?

Mr. WILLIAMS. Well, we're down in the very corner of the State of southwest Iowa.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF DAVID L. WILLIAMS, PAGE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, VILLISCA, IOWA

Mr. WILLIAMS. Senator Jepsen, Mr. Myers, I'm pleased to be here today. Chief Myers, your presence here today helps me understand your position. I think you have a very responsible job, and I'm pleased you took time to come to Iowa.

I am Dave Williams, a Page County Iowa farmer and a district soil commissioner. Last week I thought I was too busy to come to this meeting, Senator Jepsen, but after two calls from your Washington office and one from your Davenport office I've come to the conclusion that I'm pleased that I have this opportunity.

I have to be at a meeting tonight. That's why I have to leave early. I would like to confine my remarks to some thoughts and my personal philosophy of conservation—our subject today.[1] I feel very humble in my approach to the topic of conservation but at the same time I have a great concern and interest in this most important topic.

Webster's definition of conservation has two parts. No. 1 conserving: Protection of loss or waste, preservation. No. 2: Official care and protection of natural resources. The World Book Encyclopedia defines conservation as the protection and wise management of the environment. Conservation is a broad field. I will confine my brief remarks to the conservation of land and water. How we treat land and water greatly affects our lives today and in the future.

I believe the problems of the abuse of our land and water is one of the greatest problems facing man today. I also agree with a couple of statements here today saying the misuse of land is probably the single greatest problem in agriculture in long term.

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[1] See p. 407 for the prepared statement of Mr. Williams.

Three thoughts immediately came to my mind when I was asked to talk on soil conservation today. No. 1, the importance instilled in my mind by my father to leave the land—who had a strong desire to leave the land better than he found it. He was a real example for me. He was also a pioneer in the State having built some of the very first terraces in the State of Iowa.

He built those with a horse and a slip scraper in the early 1930's. No. 2 is an article in the July 1976, National Geographic magazine by an American Indian entitled "A First American Use of Land."

No. 3 is—Senator Jepsen and Chief Myers, I hope you're familiar with Albert Leapold because I think history is going to record him as being the father of conservation. I hope you're both familiar with his book entitled "Sand County Almanac" by Albert Leapold.

I see land with all its beauty and all its seasons that we in the rural community take for granted with our closeness to the land. If every human being could even have a small piece of land to call his own, to cultivate and to harvest, the world would be a peaceful place to live. To quote a National Geographic article, "The Earth is our mother and the sky is our father."

In our society as a whole, we perceive the land in terms of ownership and use. It is a lessless medium of exchange. It has for most of us, I suspect, no more spirituality as an automobile or a refrigerator for we can buy and sell the land. We can exclude each other from it, and in the complex of ownership, we can use it as we will—ownership by use and use by consent.

But this way of thinking of the land is alien to the Indian whose cultural makeup is opposed to these concepts. Indeed for him, they are all inconceivable quantities. This sentimental distinction is easier to understand with respect to ownership than to use perhaps.

Obviously, the Indian does use and has always used the land and the available resources in it. The point is that use does not indicate in any real way his idea of the land. Use is in his words and his ideas. As an Indian I think you say that I use the land, and I reply, yes, it is true, but it is not the first truth. The first truth is that I love the land. I see that it is beautiful. I delight in it. I am alive in it. Albert Leapold in his book talked a great deal about conservation aspects, and I quote, conservation is getting no where because it is incompatible with our ownership concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man or for us to reap from it a steady harvest. Land is to be loved and respected as an extension of education.

Picture our planet Earth for a moment. Land covers 30 percent or three-tenths of the Earth's surface. Unless the land is too cold, too hot, too mountainous, or too wet for growing crops. As a result, the world has only about nine-tenths of an acre of cultivated land per person to provide food for the 4.8 billion people who live on our Earth.

I would like to give a few specifics on the loss of soil by erosion. We lost 50 million acres of land—this is the size of Nebraska. We lost 3 million acres of land a year to nonagricultural use. One million acres of this is prime agriculture. This 1 million acres is equivalent to an area the size of approximately four counties in my southwest part of Iowa.

In the first 100 years of farming, we lost half of our topsoil. This is a startling fact. It takes several hundred years to replace that instant topsoil. For every bushel of corn we grow we lose two bushels of soil. In the past 10 years, we've cut half of the timberland in Iowa. The soil lost per acre in southwest Iowa is twice the State tonnage loss per acre. I heard this comment about the soybean farmers earlier. Soybeans in our area are devastating to the soil. I wish everybody on this committee could see some of the erosion that has happened. I think the responsibility lays with those people responsible.

Soil and water conservation—those two tie together. The greatest single source of the solution in America is not from factories, but from soil and our Nation's streams.

So, our Midwest soil loaded with tons of chemicals poses a real threat to fresh water sources. The Des Moines Register and Department of Agriculture show that a study on the soil conservation with the general public places it as a top priority. This is occurring I noticed in a paper that the U.S. Navy announced plans to build two atomic submarines at a cost of $5.2 billion. I was also told that it will take $20 billion to support those two submarines. Where do we place our priorities? The taxpayers of America have a real stake in the conservation of our land and water. One of the bright lights in the conservation of land is the use of no till or minimum till.

As individual farmers, we need to set examples to our neighbors. We need to look to the future; by this, I mean long-term things—so that our grandchildren will have adequate food and water. We need to be innovated in our ideas in conservation. We have been very wasteful with our natural resources. History will not record our Nation as conservation minded. We must put our act together now and in the immediate future. The land cannot continue to be treated as a commodity—to be exploited as it has in the past. In the near future, land use at a Federal and State level will be necessary. As you know in Iowa we have done some land-use planning, and I think the USDA could coordinate some of these State efforts.

Man never really owns all this land. It is only in his trust for a short time. Pope John Paul in his visit to Living History Farms said it very well. You live in the heartland of America and have been entrusted with some of the Earth's best land. Therefore, conserve the land well.

I appreciate this opportunity to share with the committee my thoughts, and I hope in some small way I've contributed to this hearing.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Dave. I understand that you do have to leave, and I would ask you, for the record, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Mr. **Williams**. Yes. By the way, I can stay for a while longer.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, I wanted to get your answer on that. Very good. Very interesting. I kind of got a message that even though our stay on Earth is brief and eternity is forever that the land will be here long after we're gone and that we ought to do everything that we can to make it even better for the short time that we're working with it.

Ralph Curtis, vice president of the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts—you probably set the record for coming the longest distance to be here today to share your thoughts with us, Ralph. Welcome to Iowa, Ralph. Welcome to this meeting. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF RALPH CURTIS, JR., VICE PRESIDENT, COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, SAQUACHE, COLO.

Mr. CURTIS. It's a great pleasure to be here. This is probably about the first time that I've ever been in Iowa, and I've heard a lot about your black soil and the great heartland of America and it means a lot when you're here than just seeing it on the screen.

Mr. Chairman, Chief Myers, and staff, I'm Ralph Curtis, a farmer and rancher from a small town in the State of Colorado and vice president of the Colorado Association of Soil Conservation Districts. I want to extend Leon's regrets that he couldn't be here today. He very much wanted to be, but he came up with an inner ear problem and was afraid that when he got here he'd come up with an equilibrium problem and so, I'm here instead.

I'm here today representing the Colorado Association of Soil Conservation Districts and the State soil conservation board. I would also like to say that I'm a member of my local county soil conservation district and I'm also manager of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District. We very much appreciate the opportunity to present some of our ideas concering the future of soil and water conservation of this country.

I'd like to get away from my remarks for just a couple of minutes and say that I do have to catch a plane out of Des Moines at 4:30 this afternoon; so, I'm going to be running right along.

I'd also like to say things a little bit different from Leon in that he has dry land farming and also irrigated farming and in much of the area west and south of us, the only way that we can grow crops is by irrigation. I have heard comments that where the drop of water falls, let it stay there. We'd like to do the same thing. I've also heard the remark that you have to put drains in to drain your land so that you can farm it. We're very much interested in water conservation and water management.

In the area where I come from, the average precipitation is 7 inches a year, and so everything that we grow must be irrigated. We are also very much interested in water management so that we can best utilize our water for our crops. I was at a National Water Resource Convention in Omaha where a person gave a talk on the overall conditions of the Ogallala formation and the problems that are occurring in that part of the United States. I was very much surprised to learn that 25 percent of the total agricultural production comes from irrigated land. I didn't realize that it was quite that large, but the thing that really hit home to me was a lot of people wondered why we irrigated.

We export 20 to 25 percent of our total agricultural products; so, irrigated agriculture is very important to the United States in helping to meet the demands of the world.

I'll go ahead now and go on with my prepared remarks. I have already submitted the written testimony. I simply wish to summarize our comments with a brief statement.

We have focused our statement on chapter 5 of the RCA document entitled the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation. This is the 1982 final report and environmental impact statement. We in Colorado support the concept program recommendations included in that document. Our concern is upon the balance between the program recommendations. We do not really know what a base-level program is. As a result, the balance between the amount of resources going into the base-level program and any resource set aside for targeting are very critical to us in the State of Colorado.

This is particularly true if the funding level of the soil and water conservation program dipped below the low-bound levels identified in chapter 5. I have included a graph of the low-bound and high-bound amount along with the fiscal year 1982, 1983, and proposed 1984 budgets. If the administration suggested the 1984 budget be approved by Congress, the soil and water conservation program is in very serious trouble because the administration's proposal is below even the low-bound projections. We certainly wish to call this to your attention, Senator.

The written statement concludes with five specific recommendations for strengthening future soil and water conservation programs. No. 1, the program would need to be voluntary for the landowner as long as his actions or lack of actions do not infringe upon his neighbor's right.

No. 2, the priorities for action need to be established at the lowest possible decisionmaking level in the State using broad national objectives.

No. 3, a strong base-level program must be maintained throughout the country. For example, the Great Plains conservation program must remain in place to resolve conservation problems in the Great Plains. We will be faced with the need to revegetate approximately 500,000 acres of fragile grasslands in eastern Colorado which have been plowed up in the past 5 years.

The incentive for plowing much of this land comes from current Federal Government programs.

No. 4, targeting projects should continue at a level not to exceed 15 percent of the annual national conservation technical assistance and cost-sharing budgets. The percentage could increase if the moneys were available in the Federal budget.

No. 5, grants to State conservation agencies need to be initiated to stimulate a greater partnership from State and local units of government. However, these grants must have come from new appropriations at the Federal level.

And the State conservation agencies must be allowed to exist in determining the priorities for the use of these funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Pete, do you have any comments or questions?

Mr. MYERS. No.

Senator JEPSEN. Well, he may have to run; so, I'll ask you my question. Should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Mr. CURTIS. Sixty percent no and forty percent yes.

Senator JEPSEN. OK. That's fine. I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Mr. CURTIS. I only know that we have to take into consideration those people, primarily in eastern Colorado and northwestern Colorado, who are grain, corn, and wheat farmers. But, primarily having a livestock background, I share the Iowa Cattlemen's Association concern very much. So, that's why I have a 60-percent no and a 40-percent yes. Thank you, sir, and I hope you'll excuse me.

Senator JEPSEN. Certainly, and have a safe journey home.

Yes, sir. Would you introduce yourself?

STATEMENT OF JERRY SHEPLER, DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL AND LOCAL AFFAIRS, IOWA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, WEST DES MOINES, IOWA, ACCOMPANIED BY ALAN ARMBRECHT

Mr. SHEPLER. My name is Jerry Shepler. I am director of environmental and local affairs for the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation. On behalf of our 149,000 farm family members, I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to comment on our State and Nation's most valuable asset—our soil—and the important task of soil conservation.

It does not seem necessary today to outline the facts and figures that report soil losses and measure the magnitude of the problem. As a U.S. Senator, we know you have access to Government agency personnel who are highly skilled in gathering that kind of information. We all agree that current soil-loss levels are a very serious problem.

Delegates to the American Farm Bureau annual meeting held at Dallas, Tex., in January of this year, adopted several resolutions concerning conservation programs. I will not attempt to explain all policy statements but comment on those that relate to current issues.

First, our policy calls for properly funded education and research programs and committing a greater portion of Government expenditures to onfarm conservation efforts. The administration's proposed fiscal year 1984 budget for all U.S. Department of Agriculture programs included under RCA calls for $272.3 million decrease from the 1982 actual budget authority. This level even falls below the low-bound budget request made by the USDA. This level of funding does not seem adequate to meet the current soil-loss problem.

Farm Bureau policy calls for emphasis directed at the most critical erosion problems and we support the targeting concept as an effective use of conservation funds. This practice provides for more conservation activities in areas where the problem is the most crucial. Iowa is one of those areas.

Iowa has been a leader in committing State money to the job of soil conservation. During the recent session of the Iowa General

Assembly, $8.4 million of soil conservation cost-share funds were appropriated, and an interest-free loan program providing loans up to $10,000 for new permanent soil conservation practices was adopted.

The Farm Bureau voting delegates urged "farmers to keep their soil losses within acceptable limits." To help carry this message to our farmer members, the Iowa Farm Bureau sponsored a conference on April 18 of this year to emphasize the soil conservation opportunities that have been made available by the PIK program. Approximately 150 members and guests attended the conference. Suggestions were made to involve local county Farm Bureau leaders in encouraging all types of soil conservation activities. The Iowa Farm Bureau has also cooperated with the Soil Conservation Service and the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation to develop bumper stickers to help call farmers' attention to soil conservation activities.

Farm Bureau voting delegates indicated support for "lengthening the cycle of time required under the Resource Conservation Act for determining approval of conservation efforts." The present 5-year cycle for the evaluation of programs should be extended to allow ample time to test program effectiveness and to permit efficiency in the preparation of reports and studies.

Our members feel that Government can best serve soil conservation through education, technical assistance and cost sharing of many types of soil conservation practices that require considerable farmer investment. We complement the Soil Conservation Service and the Iowa Department of Soil Conservation for their work and spirit of cooperation. We also commend those individuals who serve as district soil conservation commissioners.

Farm Bureau policy "opposes economic incentives to artificially stimulate producers to bring fragile grasslands under cultivation." Farm Bureau supports legislation introduced by Senator Armstrong, S. 663, that, in our opinion, will address this problem.

Primary responsibility for conserving soil lies with those who use this resource. Farmers have a key role in soil conservation. Their management decisions, crop selection and tillage practices are some of the most important factors affecting soil loss. Commodity price have an effect on farmers' crop choices and influence the use of the land. The past decade of high grain prices in relation to lower beef cattle prices have caused pasture and grassland to be converted to crop use because of economic conditions. No doubt we will experience similar price conditions and change in the future. Proper tillage methods can help with this situation.

The 1983 final program report and environmental impact statement prepared by the USDA in response to the 1977 RCA Act indicates the USDA will "give major emphasis to conservation tillage and other cost-effective conservation measures that keep control erosion at a reasonable cost." We support volunteer programs that will increase the use of no till and minimum tillage practices. We are concerned that programs which require cross-compliance would reduce the effectiveness of related program goals and oppose this concept.

We do believe there is a "quiet revolution" that is happening in the country toward the acceptance of no till farming. No till planting, which utilizes crop residues to protect the soil, was used on more than 344,000 acres in 1982, up from about 75,000 acres just 4 years ago. The number of farmers who used this planting method increased from 801 to 4,467 during the same period.

In addition, use of reduced or conservation tillage increased by about 5 million acres during the same period. Last year, conservation tillage methods (those that do not utilize the moldboard plow) were used to plant 16.4 million of the State's 22.3 million acres of row crops. No till offers one of the best potentials for keeping soil from eroding. No till practices also have an economic advantage when compared to the traditional practice of several trips across the field to prepare a seed bed. Information and education concerning no till is needed to help offset the normal tendency of many farmers to stay with traditional methods of production. Expansion of the no till revolution will assure the U.S. farmer's position as the world's most efficient producers of food for years to come.

Accompanying me today is a farmer who represents this "quiet revolution" of no till farming. He does not have any prepared presentation but would be ready to answer any questions about his farming operation and tillage practices. I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to get first-hand information.

I would like to introduce Alan Armbrecht from Colo, Iowa. Alan and his wife Linda operate a grain and hog farm in Story County. Alan started farming in 1974 using the traditional tillage practices that had been used on the family farm in the past. In 1978 he made the change to 100 percent no till on both corn and beans. Normally the Armbrechts have about 650 crop acres.

Alan and Linda represent young leadership in agriculture. He has served as Story County Farm Bureau president, and they are both currently active in the organization. Alan is also serving on the county land use commission, the county zoning board, and participates in several other activities. Alan has also been very active in speaking and promoting no till farming on a volunteer basis.

You may have questions about why and how no till was adopted on the Armbrecht farm.

We urge Government to select and support programs that would enhance and increase this "quiet revolution" toward no till farming. We feel this practice is economical and will work in conjunction with established soil conservation practices and other permanent structures to help solve one of our Nation's most serious problems. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Jerry and welcome Alan. Pete Myers, do you have any questions for Alan?

Mr. **Myers**. I'll ask him exactly what I asked the last farmer: How much have your yields gone down since you've gone to no till?

Mr. **Armbrecht**. We've seen about a 5-percent increase.

Mr. **Myers**. OK. Thank you. Do you have any problems with it? Does it take better management?

Mr. **Armbrecht**. Well, it takes a different kind of management—better timing on some kinds of activities, but it's not unmanageable by any means. It takes a different kind of management.

Mr. **Myers**. What about your net cost--did you keep up with that, or your net profit, I should say—was it up or down with no till versus conventional till?

Mr. **Armbrecht**. Our net profit has gone up considerably. We cut our fuel needs in half per acre. The amount of machinery has been cut dramatically, and I would say that we've gained probably $30 an acre on our crop, and this is something that I like to urge in all my speaking engagements is that if any young farmer wants to farm today, he can get started with $30,000 invested in machinery without a combine, but he can still farm 400 or 500 acres without machinery. I think this is something we need to look at.

Senator **Jepsen**. Pete Myers brought out some excellent, very good points, and it's refreshing to talk to a young farmer who is saying that they found a better way of doing things and who has shown, by example, a willingness to go ahead and step out and do that for 5 years—now, going on 6. You've been no till. You've increased your profit or income by $30 an acre difference. You've got a 5-percent increase in production and production costs have gone down—all of these things which should seem to be so obvious and so desirable that you don't know why more folks don't do it.

Why don't more folks do it?

Mr. **Armbrecht**. Well, I guess there's several reasons. The older farmers are the hardest ones to switch. They have been doing it for quite a few years. I think the ones we need to look at are the younger ones that are coming in. They have a new approach, and you have a chance to get them just at the beginning. So, I think that the established farmer who might be at the 50-year-old level or older—this is the hardest one—and of course, he has a large machinery inventory built up, and it's hard for him to change his ways—to change his machinery inventory. And this is one of the biggest reasons I see, and that's why I feel that you do need to educate the younger farmer coming in at this time because it is a large investment that it takes and normally I think this is one way you can give him a chance to get into the farming game.

Senator **Jepsen**. Someone once said that necessity is the mother of invention.

Mr. **Armbrecht**. Right.

Senator **Jepsen**. And certainly with high interest rates and increasing costs of living with inflation running away—thank goodness that's changed now, but there's a lot of good things that come out of trial. Sometimes the results from tough times help make for very strong people and also for a better way of doing things, and I commend and congratulate you for what you have done. Good luck to you and continue to speak up. If we can ever be of any assistance, please call.

Mr. **Armbrecht**. Thank you, Senator.

Senator **Jepsen**. Judie Hoffman, Iowa League of Women Voters—welcome, Judie. Thank you for coming.

STATEMENT OF JUDIE HOFFMAN, REPRESENTING LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA, DES MOINES, IOWA

Ms. **Hoffman**. Thank you. I am Judie Hoffman representing the League of Women Voters of Iowa.

The league is a nonpartisan, volunteer citizen education and political action organization and has members in 30 Iowa communities. It has a long history of interest in natural resource management.

I commend Senator Jepsen for holding this field hearing to allow Iowans to present their views on soil conservation. Citizen participation is the cornerstone of all democratic government. Responsive and responsible government at all levels requires attention to the interests and opinions of the citizenry. This is especially true for Government land resource management since land use policies directly or indirectly affect us all.

Soil erosion is an especially serious problem in Iowa. One hundred years ago our topsoil depth averaged 14 to 18 inches. Today it is only 6 to 8 inches. A drive across any part of the State in springtime reveals the tops of rolling hills where the topsoil has all but disappeared. Iowa has more acres of land experiencing serious erosion than any State in the Union. This is a dismal and alarming record for one of the most productive agricultural States in the Nation. It should be apparent that it is in the national interest—as well as the State of Iowa—to control soil erosion.

And I might add parenthetically at this stage that we are losing 40,000 to 50,000 acres a year in Iowa to urbanization. And this is something that is not looked into by the RCA and probably it should be.

Ever since the 1920's, the League of Women Voters has been promoting the concept of wise management of land resources in the public interest. It has done this by taking official positions after thorough study on a number of questions of public policy which concern the use of natural resources. Many of these positions relate to the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act. The League of Women Voters of Iowa has recognized, through its various stands on public issues, that land is not just a commodity, but is instead a finite resource. The league believes that land ownership, whether public or private, should imply the responsibility of stewardship. Wise management of land resources by Government must respect private rights, but at the same time it must promote, and insist on, public and private responsibilities.

The League of Women Voters of Iowa adopted a land use position which is based on the principle that every level of planning and management which is in agreement with the Resource Conservation Act [RCA]. These responsibilities of Government include identification of areas of critical concern and the regulation of their use. Obviously, the types of concerns differ depending on the size and responsibilities of the unit of Government involved, but soil erosion is of central importance at all levels.

Important features of land use planning include the collection, analysis, and dissemination of economic, environmental, and social data and the setting of public policy. An important component of policy is the provision of financial incentives to encourage compliance with standards that have been established. Adequate funding is a key element of an effective land use policy. This includes particularly soil conservation measures. A soil conservation plan which is not adequately funded can be worse than no plan at all, since it can mislead the public into thinking that this important problem is being addressed. Unfortunately, this is true of present soil conservation policies at the Federal level.

The league has also adopted positions on water which have implications for the RCA. We support appropriate conservation measures to prevent nonpoint source pollution of water. We advocate cost sharing of these conservation measures by Government and private interests. We also feel that the enforcement of conservation plans for projects receiving Farmers Home Administration loans is essential. At all government levels, eligibility for assistance should be linked to compliance with conservation guidelines. A strong program must have both incentives and enforceable penalties. Unfortunately, without penalties, conservation programs are merely suggestions and will not be respected.

Government education programs dealing with soil conservation have been in place for 40 years, but important segments of the population have still not been reached. This should not be taken as a sign of failure, but instead as a measure of the magnitude of the job. Government efforts at public education should not be abandoned; they should be increased.

We know that soil erosion cannot be stopped completely, but it can be controlled. The goal should be sustainable soil productivity. Conservation tillage, no till farming, crop rotation, use of grassed waterways, contour strip cropping and other such measures are all good management practices which have their appropriate place. The best systems for each individual farm must be separately determined and governments must provide financial and tax incentives to promote conservation investment. In the end the individual farmer, working with Government agencies, must be the responsible steward of the land.

The problems of soil conservation are complex and multifaceted. The one thing that is absolutely certain is that they will not go away if left unattended. It is for this reason that public forums, like the one being held today, are of vital importance.

In closing, I'd like to say that in your many tours across the State during the last few years, I hope you have seen some of the bulletin boards that the league has sponsored saying, "Save soil today for food tomorrow." Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. I have. Thank you. Would you please introduce yourself?

Mr. **Armstrong**. J. D. Armstrong.

Senator **Jepsen**. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF J. D. ARMSTRONG, ARMSTRONG CO., AMES, IOWA

Mr. **Armstrong**. I want to thank you, Senator, for inviting me and allowing me to express my concern about the preservation of our natural resources, mainly water and soil. I believe that the new soil and water conservation program must improve the efficiency of the uses of these resources.

In our area of Iowa we receive normally an average of 34 to 36 inches per year of rainfall. Of this 36 inches, approximately 66 percent is retained in our crop production—soybeans, corn, alfalfa, and so forth. Six percent of the rainfall that falls on the surface is used by industrial consumption. Eight percent goes into the agriculture leaving 20 percent uncontrolled runoff. This 20 percent uncontrolled runoff is my concern.

Water, if controlled, can be recycled many times. We could recycle it 100 times in a mile. We need to detain and slow down this runoff. If this runoff would be controlled by proper management, our soil erosion would be reduced drastically. By slowing down the runoff, erosion soil would not be carried far. It would be dropped and reused on various elevations of the Earth. By slowing down the runoff by means of tributaries and small retention dams this method would make a daily evaporation in the State of Iowa where it would control—I'm going to slow down a little bit—because of dews and condensation the evaporation is 3 to 5 percent in degree a day. By slowing down the runoff we will reduce all flood damages on major structures.

What I'm saying is we need to go to the waterheads of our lakes and our rivers and construct small detention dams—a funnel here, a funnel here, a funnel here—not major big dams like Coralville or Saylorville, but all detention dams so that when the water falls in Algona, Iowa, it would probably be 6 to 8 weeks before it would hit the Mississippi River. In the process of doing this, it would have hours and hours and hours of slowing down and dropping its siltation at various points. We must use this resource to the fullest—use it many times a day if we have to.

We need local, State, and Federal soil and water management control programs such as the 1950 Missouri River Basin—the Pick-Sloan program. The Pick-Sloan program was started in 1950 and is still going on in slow progress. In Kansas and Nebraska they're using the water by diversion from the main channels—the Skunk River, the Missouri River—over and over and over again they divert it out into the agricultural fields and back in.

This is what I think Iowa is lacking. We're 15 to 20 years behind the States of Nebraska and Kansas in reusing our water resources. Iowa, like no other State in the Union, has a natural waterway control possibility. Do you folks realize that we have water to the east of us, to the west of us and water down the middle of us, and a drainage system practically uncontrolled entirely except for the Mississippi River where we have a few of the dams—we can have an ideal water-soil management program if we plan properly.

I have a plan here of Pick-Sloan that I'd like to show the people, and this has been going on since 1950, and it's very, very impressive. I've been out in that area 17 years, and I've been down in Pete's area in the rice fields, and this is what the State of Iowa needs. Senator, we need a study program in detail for the control and management of our natural resource, water. If we can control our water, we can control 90 percent of our erosion. I feel that our problems can be 90 percent controlled if we will get busy and plan control of our water the same as we do with our natural gases, our oils, and some of our other resources that we have.

We can't go into a mining operation now—the strip mines they are being controlled—why can't we control our water resources? Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very, very much. Very interesting. Father White, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF FATHER NORMAN WHITE, NATIONAL CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE CONFERENCE, FAYETTE, IOWA

Father WHITE. I'm Father Norm White, director of Rural Life in the Dubuque Catholic Archdiocese—30 counties of northeast Iowa. My statement today on behalf of the National Catholic Rural Life Council and more specifically their soil stewardship project has been in operation since last fall.

Senator Jepsen and Administrator Myers, this is an opportunity that we relish to speak with you today—during the past 2 months, I have attended 7 of 10 meetings in 5 eastern Iowa counties dealing with soil conservation. This land stewardship project is a series of public programs on soil loss cosponsored by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and a variety of Midwest church denominations. The attendance was interfaith, with the meetings taking place in six Protestant churches and one Catholic institution.

Life meetings were held in 14 counties—targeted counties in Minnesota earlier this spring—5 northwestern Iowa counties had meetings of this sort—and we're scheduled for 5 southwestern Iowa counties in August; and if funds are available, meetings like this will be held in North Dakota and South Dakota this fall. Wherever these meetings have been held, followup meetings took place, and they are ongoing committees of people to continue working on soil conservation.

Farmers and townfolks gathered to share their concerns and to discuss the need for the development of a widely accepted land ethic in America and for legislation in harmony with that ethic. I heard people express themselves as stewards of the land, committed to the goal of leaving the land in better condition than when they started farming it.

They are concerned about the neighbor who still plows in the fall (or plows at all), does not leave grass waterways, farms up and down the hill without efforts at contour or terraces; they are concerned by absentee landlords who don't insist on tenant stewardship, by corporations (and others) who tear out fences, trees, and terraces for the quick buck; some objected to the widespread use of herbicides and pesticides, bean and corn rotation, farming marginal lands, and a host of other practices that militate against responsible stewardship of the land.

Many expressed a desire to build terraces and to utilize other conservation practices that require a large outlay of money. Their inability to provide sufficient finances themselves prompts them, and many of us who are supportive of ethical land practices, to request more governmental assistance in funding valid land stewardship efforts. As your recent Newsletter stated: "farmers * * * can't do the job of protecting it (the land) alone."

These concerned citizens request legislation that will help us save our precious topsoil. Among other items, we are concerned that a sodbuster bill be passed, that you work for passage of the Agricultural Productivity Act of 1983 (S. 1128), which is the Senate's version of Representative Weaver's House bill to fund research in organic and biohumic farming.

We also discussed at our spring meetings the need for a conservation PIK program. If farmers want money for leaving land idle, then they should be required to practice sound conservation on that land. There are fields laying idle that were actually fall-plowed (or plowed this spring) with no cover whatsoever. We also request that all target and loan programs be tied with conservation.

As spokesman for the land stewardship project, I wish to express our appreciation for the opportunity to give our views at this hearing.

Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Father White, thank you very much. Ralph Schnur, welcome, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF RALPH SCHNUR, COLO, IOWA

Mr. **Schnur**. I am Ralph Schnur of Colo, Iowa.

Mr. Chairman, Chief Myers, I'm privileged to have you here today, members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, I am pleased to have the chance to appear before you, and congratulate you all on the series of hearings you are conducting on the problems of agriculture. It is very important for all of us to have an understanding of what is going on out here in rural America, the problems we face, and what can be accomplished in finding some answers. I am optimistic that indeed we can find solutions.

I have farmed about 600 acres here in Story County, Iowa, about 20 miles from Ames, for the past 35 years. I know this land and have a good understanding of what the problems are in this part of Iowa. In addition to my operation, I have been very active at the local level in our soil and water conservation district, have participated in the 208 planning process, the State advisory committee to the Department of Environmental Quality, and have extensively participated in water quality concerns for the Skunk River area.

This past year I have also served on a national steering committee for a very important soil conservation study conducted by the American Farmland Trust. There were, as a part of the committee, 12 other farmers and ranchers, and we gave our guidance to the project, based on our collective farming experience.

An important issue in this study was a series of about 700 in-depth interviews with farmers and ranchers in six separate States to find out how they felt about erosion, soil conservation, and Government programs and policies at all levels.

I feel that it was about time someone really talked to those of us who work the land every day, and I commend the American Farmland Trust [AFT] for its efforts.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, we farmers like to get to the point, so I'll do just that. I would like to take a few minutes and give you a progress report on soil conservation here in Story County. I would like to divide soil conservation work into two categories—temporary and permanent practices. Let's look at temporary practices first; I am speaking now about conservation tillage, grassed waterways, and contour farming.

These are practices which don't cost a lot of money, and may even lower the farmer's costs. We are making rapid progress in the area of conservation tillage. The field that is plowed with the moldboard plow is hard to find. I would estimate that 95 percent or more of the land in my area is farmed with residue on the surface.

The moldboard plow—the symbol of agriculture—will soon be found only in the museums. Mr. Chairman, I think that is great progress.

Now, for the bad news which is in the area of permanent practices. The District Resources Inventory Report for Story County called for 1,500 miles of terraces. But at most we are building only 15 miles per year. Mr. Chairman, we must do better. That rate must be doubled and doubled again.

We have more farmers walking in the door asking for cost-sharing assistance than we can serve. Our foremost problem, though, is not enough cost-share money. The farmers surveyed by AFT said that the local, State, and Federal governments should all provide cost sharing for terraces. Here in Story County, the local government has provided this assistance for several years. In Iowa, the State government is providing over $5 million per year. It seems the Federal Government is lagging in this area.

I believe that temporary practices are the responsibility of the farmer, but that permanent practices, such as terraces, should be cost shared by the public because much of the benefit to be derived is in the area of water management. Terraces lower the flood crest, they improve water quality, and they help maintain stream flow.

Our next pressing problem involving terraces is getting the dirt moved. I believe we should involve farmers in this. They have a lot of idle horsepower available in the late summer months, and they can acquire the ability and skills necessary in short order. And, if we can get the necessary money for cost sharing, we have only one remaining problem. It is the technical help needed for terrace layout. The district office is already a busy place, so more technical assistants are needed.

Overall, Government funds should be targeted to the areas with the worst erosion problems, and the AFT study found that farmers agreed, even if it means a little less money for other areas. Yet we must keep a solid base of support for soil conservation in all areas of the Nation.

It is also apparent to me that our Government must stop subsidizing the farmer who insists on cropping the most erosion-prone land. That farmer should not be eligible for any Government commodity support or other programs. The sodbuster bill sponsored by Senator Armstrong is a good step in the right direction. This highly erosive land should be taken out of production over the long term. The means to do that are already in the 1981 farm bill.

And, as we have seen with PIK this year, farmers are willing to retire a lot of land (usually their worst) if they are given financial incentives. Because our worst erosion problems are on a small part of our land, we could accomplish a lot by simply getting the worst land out of production for a long period.

Mr. Chairman, your committee can also be helpful in the area of tax treatment for soil and water conservation expenses. I believe we need to make the investment in soil and water conservation as attractive as new grain storage, new machinery, or livestock buildings.

The present rules are especially restrictive to the retired farmer who is renting for cash to enable him to draw his social security.

And last, someone needs to sit down with all of the USDA agencies with policies which affect farming and soil conservation. Far too often the farmer gets a different story, depending on the agency he or she talks to, because the policies within the USDA are not consistent.

This problem was very clear in the AFT survey. And at our March meeting for the Soil Conservation Project Steering Committee, brought together by AFT, a lot of good ideas surfaced in our discussions. The thought was expressed that we needed a national agricultural policy to eliminate conflicts in agricultural programs. This policy should be known and considered by other areas of Government—one which protects our resources, our income, food supply, and provides good, stable markets for what we grow.

In particular, I would like to focus on a few of the important points we felt should be considered:

First, the present allotment system promotes intensive farming practices that reward those who don't properly care for our Nation's soil and water resources.

Second, removing the most erodible land from all types of row crop production would cut erosion rates and improve water quality.

Third, full utilization of our better soils for crop production gives us an opportunity to rebuild and install good conservation practices on our poorer soils.

Fourth, reserve entry and exit prices must be set carefully with consideration given to world competition.

Fifth, less costly and more effective practices would aid in meeting national objectives over both the short and long term.

With these thoughts in mind, I have put together some objectives for a national agricultural policy:

First, assure consumers of stable food and fiber supplies at reasonable cost.

Second, assure food and fiber producers a fair return on their investment and a stable price.

Third, conserve and protect soil and water resources for future generations.

Fourth, establish an export policy that earns maximum foreign exchange and maintains maximum domestic jobs consistent with good land use practices.

This Nation could meet these objectives through implementation of the following programs:

First, continue present farmer-owned grain reserve programs.

Second, when reserves exceed a set amount, go to a land reserve of 3, 5, or 10 years, at the farmer's choice.

Third, land with the highest erosion rates should be given the highest priority for reserve entry.

Fourth, highly erosive land would not be eligible for price supports, but would be eligible for reserve programs; cost sharing would be available for the erosion-prone land that can be farmed successfully with good conservation treatment while holding soil loss to acceptable levels.

Mr. Chairman, I urge you to speak further with American farmers and to take a closer look at the soil conservation study conducted by the American Farmland Trust. The results will be out soon, and I understand Robert Gray of AFT will be testifying before the Joint Economic Committee and your committee later this month.

I know you will find the results interesting and a lot of opportunities for changes in fiscal and other policies are apparent from what the farmers had to say to us.

Again, I thank you for the chance to speak before your committee, and for your interest in soil conservation and other agricultural issues.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you. I'm looking forward to receiving Mr. Gray's report next month. Now, Dan Chargo, president of the Iowa Student Chapter of Soil Conservation Society of America, said he had a thing or two he'd like to contribute. Mr. Chargo, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF DAN CHARGO, PRESIDENT, IOWA STUDENT CHAPTER OF SOIL CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Mr. CHARGO. I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I know my grandma will treasure this. I would also like to thank the gentleman from SCS for sitting under the banner of the top university of the big eight. When we founded our organization, Student Chapter of Soil Conservation Society of America, we adopted the motto as follows: "It's not their problem, it's ours." And when we adopted that motto, we dedicated ourselves to two goals.

One was to educate ourselves. We felt it important that when we left Iowa State and went into the real world that we understood soil erosion and that we understood what it takes to solve it.

Our second goal was to educate others. We believe that we have a responsibility to teach other people the seriousness of erosion and the ways to solve it.

Now, today I've heard a lot about the PIK program incentives to farmers and the balancing of farmers to do what he wants with his land against society's right to have clean water and clean air. And I think those topics are vitally important, but I think there's one topic that we shouldn't forget—the education of our youth.

Today's youth are tomorrow's farmers. I think that there are three vital reasons that we need to consider education and need to remember it.

First of all, today's youth are tomorrow's farmers. It's easier to teach then now than it is later.

Second, as people earlier indicated that soil conservation—and our soil conservation is important to our national defense and our economy. I think that we need to teach our youth at a young age that it's important to protect that resource.

Finally, I think that's important—or it's easier to teach the youth now that he should protect the soil than it is to teach the farmer. It's easier to teach a new dog new tricks.

Finally, the President has said that we are in trouble in education. I feel this is one area where we may be able to improve our educational system. I'd like to disagree with some of the statements that some people said earlier about the importance—or that soil is our most important natural resource. I'm not sure I believe that.

Soil is not the most important natural resource. It's that runny-nosed first grader out there whose only concern is how far he can kick the ball. That's our most important resource. We must protect our soil so that a young boy or girl can have a farm 10 or 12 years from now. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Well, I can see why they made you president of the Iowa State Student Chapter of the Soil Conservation Organization. Very good. As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined—the common saying—is what you're saying; isn't it?

Walt Geoppinger past president of national—put that microphone just a little bit closer to you, Walt—past president of the National Corn Growers Association. You may proceed. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF WALTER M. GOEPPINGER, PAST PRESIDENT, NATIONAL CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. GOEPPINGER. Thank you, Senator, for allowing me to testify before this group this afternoon. I'm sure that the testimony that you've received has given you many good ideas for tackling the immense job of bringing our soil resource into proper care.

All during my 50 years of farming which began after my graduation from Iowa State in 1933, I've held as my No. 1 objective in all my testimony given before various committees of the U.S. Congress and speeches throughout the United States the need to preserve our Nation's soil heritage. I've always practiced soil conservation protection methods on our home farm's land as well as wildlife habitat establishment.

Thus far, the farm policies of this Nation have done a poor job of soil conservation. It's always been a voluntary matter for the farmer and the economic incentives have not been provided to participate in true continuous application of conservation. No matter how much we can point to and brag about in the way of soil conservation, nevertheless, we have lost over half of the soil in this rich midwest area in just 100 years of farming. That was the best half as it contained the most water absorptive humus. For a mulitiple of reasons, unless we do something drastic soon, the second half will go more quickly than the first.

No till row crop farming calls for such huge doses of chemicals that the bacteria and plants that grow in our soils may eventually rebel against them and cause excessive water pollution.

Regardless of how you raise grain crops, there will always be excessive soil loss. Much of the southern and eastern portions of the United States have lost all of their soil or most of it, and are now so poor that the land will only grow trees. The farmers are gone. Incidentally, in New England, 80 percent of the land was covered with forest when the land was first broken by the pioneers and it went from 80 percent forest down to 20 percent. Now, it's back up to 80 percent forest because the thin top soil eroded away and there wasn't anything left there to farm.

So, the farmers are gone and now city dwellers live out on the farms and work in town. Well, what does all this have to do with the current economic dilemma of today's corn and soybean farmer? The solution of the soil erosion problem if properly implemented by our national government can solve the economic problems of production. What is needed as an immediate implementation is a Federal law that mandates a 20 percent set-aside of all corn, soybeans, cotton, wheat, barley, rye, oats, rice, grain sorghums, and any other field crops. In other words, all cropland that is worked with machinery from year to year other than orchards.

These set-aside acres should be required to be seeded down for a period of 3 years and legumes such as alfalfa or clover along with grasses such as brome and orchard grass, using oats as the nurse crop which would be clipped the first year. At the end of 3 years during which no pasturage or haymaking would be allowed on it, the land should then be released for cropping and another different 20 percent of the farm be similarly seeded down for a 3-year period likewise—this to continue on as a permanent mandatory program. Thus, in 15 years all of our U.S. farmland will have had effective rest and rebuilding.

All this would continue on as a mandatory permanent program of encouraging water purification and simultaneous buildup of the soil's humus and new topsoil.

What would cause farmers to accept this program? This would have to be met with land rental payments in the entire United States. About 260 million acres would be involved of which 20 percent would be in set-aside each year. At an average rental of $120 per acre per year, the cost would be about $6.4 billion annually. Is this an exhorbitant expenditure to ensure our future food supply for ours and coming generations? Certainly not. In light of all of the hundreds of billions spent on defense and weaponary equipment that not only becomes outmoded shortly, but is completely nonproductive for the people of this country. The free market fence-to-fence farming policies of Secretaries Benson and Butz have been disastrous for the American farmer economically and for our Nation's soil. A new mandatory approach to land use must be adopted now if we are to continue as a nation of having plenty of food for ourselves and others, and to retain the soil before it is gone.

Thank you very much.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, and now, Walt, starting with you, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs? Yes or no.

Mr. GOEPPINGER. Will you repeat the question, please?

Senator JEPSEN. Yes. In your opinion, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Mr. GOEPPINGER. In other words, what you're asking is: Should a farmer comply with the programs in order to receive soil conservation payments——

Senator JEPSEN. That's all right.

Mr. GOEPPINGER. For work being done on his farm or vice versa? I don't understand your question.

Senator JEPSEN. Vice versa. Should the Federal commodity support program—when we make them up, should they have integrated in them a requirement that soil and water conservation programs must be planned, developed, and instigated?

Mr. GOEPPINGER Absolutely, yes.

Senator Jepsen. Thank you. Jerry.

Mr. Shepler. Our present resolution would not support that.

Senator Jepsen. Alan.

Mr. Armbrecht. No.

Senator Jepsen. Judie.

Ms. Hoffman. Yes

Senator Jepsen. Father White.

Father White. Yes.

Senator Jepsen. Ralph.

Mr. Schnur. Yes, if——

Senator Jepsen. Yes, if—how about you, Dan Chargo?

Mr. Chargo. You bet.

Senator Jepsen. You bet. Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong. Yes, definitely, and I'd like to make another observation, and I've traveled in 26 States in the last 3 years, and I've been on about 100 projects and one of the complaints that I find is the fact that the farmer as of now that is getting ready to retire—say, he's 50- or 60-years old—and a young man comes along and he would like to have terraces. The old man would like to have terraces and grass waterways, but the money that he has to forward is over a 3-to-5 year program, and he has to put that out in 1 year, and he can't get any support for that first year; and so, he comes to me, and I've built thousands and thousands of feet of terraces for these people, and as they ask what kind of an arrangement can we finance with you so that you can go out and build these terraces? Now, I've suggested many times that 50–50 or 20–80 such as the Interstate Highway did if it's a military highway, it's 90–10 and if it's a State improved highway, it's 80–20. And I think the young farmer coming along is going to reap the harvest of his father and his father is going to pay the bill, and I don't think that that is quite fair. That's one of the comments that I'm getting through this traveling that I've had.

Senator Jepsen. Thank you. Thank you all for your testimony and for coming today. I would advise you that if it seems as though we're going to move out with some dispatch here, it is because a whole bunch of us here today have a 5:30 plane to catch in Des Moines.

I want to thank you at this time for coming here today and your participation and I now pronounce this meeting adjourned.

[Whereupon, the subcommittee adjourned, to reconvene Friday, June 24, 1983, in the Brattleboro Retreat Conference Center, Brattleboro, Vt.]

REGIONAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEEDS

FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1983

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION,
FORESTRY, AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY,
Brattleboro, Vt.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, in the Brattleboro Retreat Conference Center, Hon. Roger W. Jepsen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Jepsen.

Also present: Senator Leahy.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER W. JEPSEN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator **JEPSEN**. I would like to welcome everyone on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry, and Environment of the Senate Agriculture Committee. I had the opportunity to meet and visit with some of you before we started this morning and hope that during our breaks I will have the opportunity to get to know and visit with everyone here sometime today.

The discussion today is a regional look at soil and water conservation problems that are unique to the New England regional farming area.

As chairman of the subcommittee, I am looking forward to hearing your views on the proposed national conservation program. Your opinions on this effort will assist the Senate in considering whether or not we should accept the administration's report and program document.

Before we begin, I would like to express my appreciation to Senator Leahy for hosting these hearings in his home State of Vermont. We drove up here in the dark from Hartford last night, so I did not have an opportunity to see what Senator Leahy continues to tell me is the most beautiful countryside in the United States of America; but I am looking forward to doing that this afternoon as I start on my return trip.

Senator, the conservation of our agricultural land and water resources is an important concern to both of us. I appreciate your interest in the subcommittee's work and your help over this past year. Your active participation in the conservation hearings and your continued support of legislative proposals is indicative of an enduring commitment to preserving the Nation's natural resources. Your hard work in securing consistent funding for the soil and water conservation programs is widely recognized.

I look forward to working with you, in your capacity as a member of the Agricultural Subcommittee on Production and Marketing. As members of the Agriculture Committee we worked on many things together. Land management, what was the title of the bill that we worked on together?

Senator LEAHY. Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Senator JEPSEN. Farmland Protection Policy Act, that's right. Your work with that legislation provides a soil and water conservation incentive in the various price and income support programs that many farmers have come to appreciate.

By holding these hearings here today, you are signaling to the Congress and to the people in the New England area that you are a spokesperson for their interests. I hope you would like to make a statement at this time. I would be pleased. This is your place.

STATEMENT OF HON. PATRICK J. LEAHY, A U.S. SENATOR FROM VERMONT

Senator LEAHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My whole statement will be part of the record, but I would especially like to welcome the chairman, Senator Jepsen, here. He knows I brag about Vermont an awful lot.

I think you will find that when you come here the people of Vermont and throughout New England are very much like the people you find in Iowa. They are good; they are real people; they have a real concern.

I should mention to the people here that since coming to the Senate, my colleague from Iowa has been active on legislation dealing with the conservation of our natural resources and has been a leader in that area.

It is important because we in the Congress pass many laws, but it is not nearly often enough that we sit down with the people who are actually dealing with these laws, deciphering the regulations, and handling the paperwork. We talk among ourselves in Washington a lot, and we rarely get out to talk to the people involved with the laws, very rarely.

Today, we are going to hear from Vermonters and others—not professional testifiers in Washington, D.C. I am grateful to Senator Jepsen for this opportunity and want to extend my thanks to those from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island for traveling to Brattleboro today to speak. New England has really come to Vermont today, Mr. Chairman, and we are glad to have you here.

We are going to talk about the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. It was an act which directed the Department of Agriculture to conduct an extensive review of this Nation's soil and water resources. After this review was complete, the act then required the Department to implement a strategy for preserving these important national assets.

Last year, the Reagan administration published their "National Program for Soil and Water Conservation." This report generated a lot of discussion and debate in Washington and throughout Vermont, New England, and the Nation.

It raised the Nation's awareness of some of the critical problems facing our soil and water today, but it also raised a couple of troubling questions for Vermont and New England.

First, the report proposed that Federal funding for soil and water conservation should be targeted according to two national priorities. Up to 25 percent of available resources would be used in areas of the country suffering from the worst soil erosion and water depletion.

Now, I think we must address these critical areas, but I do not believe that we should divert funding away from New England, New York, and other areas to serve this purpose. Here in Vermont, and elsewhere in this region, we have done well in controling soil erosion and water depletion. I would hate to see us penalized for doing a good job.

Preserving our water quality, which Chet Eaton will speak of later, and protecting our prime farmland, which Fay Leavitt will address, are of critical importance to Vermont and New England. I was very disappointed that the protection of our prime agricultural lands was listed only as a concern of the administration. Mr. Chairman, this should really be a priority.

The Farmland Protection Policy Act was enacted 2 years ago. You had played a pivotal role in helping us get that through the Senate Agriculture Committee. The act called on the Secretary of Agriculture to coordinate with other Federal agencies in an effort to insure that Federal projects would not needlessly be located on our prime agricultural lands. It would be gone forever, paved over, and never farmed again. These efforts were designed to complement ongoing State and local farmland protection work.

I know that the town of Vernon, just this Tuesday, approved a plan where the town would buy the development rights to farmland. That is a town right nearby, Mr. Chairman. Brattleboro has undertaken an exhaustive research project for the protection of agriculture in this southern region of the State. People are genuinely concerned, Mr. Chairman. Farmland protection should be much more than a concern.

I am very concerned with proposed funding for soil and water conservation efforts. I know Mr. Chairman, that you do also feel the administration's proposed soil and water conservation budget is not adequate. In fact, neither does USDA. In their report USDA recommended a high-bound figure for funding over the next 5 years and a low-bound figure.

Well, the budget request was $41 million less than the lowest figure proposed by USDA. That is clearly insufficient. It is not sufficient for American agriculture. It is our largest industry, employing some 23 million people and generating nearly $40 billion of exports per year.

Our land, our soil, and our water form the lifeblood of this great industry. While we try to keep Federal spending under control, as well we should, I think we have to look at those areas that spend a little to get back a great deal; and in agriculture we do that.

The security of this country is extricably entwined with our ability to feed ourselves and export. That is every bit as important as some of our weapons systems. Whether we add another one or two or three, no matter how well armed we are, it does not do us any good if we cannot feed ourselves. We are going to be able to import oil or anything else unless we also export and get money for that.

Year after year the best and most constant export we have had has been agriculture. For our own security we have got to be able to feed ourselves and still export. We are the only major nation in the world who has never had the fear of being starved out by a hostile power. That should not change.

Mr. Chairman, I applaud you for having us here and for having these all over the country. I think it is important. I want to especially thank you for making an effort to bring one to New England. I know you had to do some arm twisting to make sure we could put it together. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. As most of you know, the subcommittee held the first in this series of hearings on March 9, 1983, in Washington, D.C. The hearing was the first major Senate effort in 2 years to focus national attention on the serious soil erosion and water conservation problems that we as a nation must confront over this coming decade.

Since then, the subcommittee has held hearings in Mississippi, Kentucky, and in my home State of Iowa. A common concern expressed by many throughout the Nation is that continued Federal interest in soil and water conservation is essential if the United States is to meet future domestic and worldwide demands for our food and fiber products. That was so ably discussed here a minute ago by the Senator.

An enduring Federal commitment is paramount for the continued success of our past soil and water conservation efforts. However, as I stated previously, I am concerned that this administration, like many before it, is for some reason or other, not dedicated to these goals. We think it is a lack of appreciation.

Many times it follows that before you can really appreciate something you need to understand it. You need to have perception and depth in your understanding. Then with that education and that perception, you better appreciate it.

It is part of our job that the task that we have before us in these hearings of review of the 1977 act and our formulation of whatever action or activities or policies that we have for the next years, the next generation, one of the main things we have got to do is tell our story and how important soil conservation is to this rich, bountiful land that we have in this Nation and that we have been blessed with over the years.

This year, in the proposed budget, the administration requested $300 million less for soil and water conservation activities than last year. I feel that, even in times of fiscal austerity, this seems to be particularly severe and unwarranted.

It suggests that good land stewardship is not a priority in our overall farm effort. To me, adequate soil protection and water conservation are the foundation upon which most farmers would want to rely. Other concerns are generated because of the noncommittal tone of and conflicting statements in the final report and program document.

For example, in the 1981 RCA draft report, it states: ". . . Even with the most optimistic outlook . . . soil erosion after 50 years would still exceed the nondegradation level." In the final report that we are examining today, the first objective is to lead to nondegradation of the Nation's soil and water resources.

Yet, if the most optimistic outlook is not expected to achieve nondegradation in 50 years, how can we expect a scaled-down program proposed in the final report and restricted by the 1984 proposed budget to lead to the nondegradation of our soil and water resources?

I am also troubled that neither the priorities nor the proposed program refer to the retention of prime and unique farmland. Senator Leahy has expressed his deep concern over the issue, and I expect we will hear testimony on this topic from many of you today.

I have been personally in contact with Secretary Block and Peter Myers, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, on this issue. I have been advised that last week, the administration signed off on the draft proposal on how the program should be carried out. We are now awaiting approval from the Office of Management and Budget on the proposed rules and regulations that are necessary to implement the act. It is expected that this information will be approved within the next week.

The rules and regulations are expected to be published within the month. Therefore, the subcommittee will most likely wait and review this information before holding a separate hearing on the issue.

It also should be noted that the 1981 farm bill authorized the Department to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the special areas conservation programs: The matching grants program and the RC&D program, among others.

The proposed budget will not pay for the administration and implementation of these and other conservation programs. In the 1984 budget authorization and appropriations, Congress has, once again, as they have done year in and year out, restored funding for many of these programs. In addition, we have provided money for the matching grant program and the special areas conservation program.

As your representatives in Congress, we cannot progress without your interest and support. I need to know if you share my concerns, where your needs differ, and what you feel is necessary to help you as a farmer and a resource user carry out soil and water conservation on the farm.

I questioned the administration's intent first and asked for a full and complete explanation of the RCA report. Now I am traveling across the country to listen to the views and opinions of all of you. Additionally, in my capacity as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, I am simultaneously conducting a series of hearings in Washington and throughout the Nation to explore all aspects of farm programs: their current effectiveness and their future appropriateness to ongoing farm policies.

As part of that effort, I have been asking Government officials, private sector analysts, specialists in academia, farmers, and other citizens how soil and water conservation efforts can be better integrated into all farm policies. We will bring the Joint Economic Committee to Bangor, Maine, in September to conduct a New England regional hearing on a comprehensive farm program.

I would like to mention that Senator Mitchell and Senator Humphrey hoped to attend today. However, their statements will be entered in the record.[1]

Now, then, Senator, I would like to call the first panel of witnesses. Before I do that, just to give you a thumbnail sketch of today's hearings, our schedule will be approximately as follows:

Panel 1 will be scheduled sometime until 10:30. We scheduled panel 1 from 9:45 to 10:30.

Panel 2 will be from 10:30 to 11 o'clock.

Panel 3 will be from 11 o'clock to 11:30.

Panel 4 will be from 11:30 to 12 o'clock.

Panel 5 will be from 1 o'clock to 1:30.

Panel 6 will be from 1:30 to 2 o'clock.

Panel 7 will be from 2 o'clock to 2:30. I have 7 panels.

We will have a timer. We would ask that you try to hold your remarks to approximately 5 minutes in length, so we can have time for both questions and ideas.

As I said, we are here to find out information and exchange information; to get your ideas and your input on record. All the remarks that you have in writing today will be entered into the record as if read; when you come before us to testify here, you may read your statement. If it is very long, I hope you would not.

You may summarize it and comment on that basis, but please know that you may do exactly as you feel most comfortable doing. We will understand that if it goes over the 5 minutes.

We are here to learn; we are here to work together. We all have the same goals in mind.

So with that welcome, thank you all for coming. At this time I would ask Senator Leahy to introduce the witnesses from Vermont.

Senator **Leahy**. It is purely coincidental that Vermont goes first. We decided to do this alphabetically. We have the benefit of Richard Noel. Could you all please come up here? There is Chester Eaton, Bob Wagner, and Fay Leavitt. I will tell you briefly who each of these people are.

Mr. Chairman, Dick Noel is right directly in front of us here. He is an agrarian from up in Franklin County up in the northwestern part of the State. He was at our dairy hearings, in Fairfield, wasn't it, Dick?

Mr. **Noel**. Right.

Senator **Leahy**. He also sent one of the things that probably speaks as eloquently as testimony. He sent me a pack of notices of farm auctions that we see in Iowa and other places. He will be testifying as president of Vermont Association of Conservation Districts.

Then we have Bob Wagner who is just to his right. He is a land use specialist with the Vermont Department of Agriculture. He will have an overview of the importance of agriculture in Vermont.

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[1] See p. 409 for the prepared statement of Senator Mitchell and p. 408 for the prepared statement of Senator Humphrey.

Chet Eaton, who I mentioned before, has been working and operating a diversified farm in the Connecticut River Valley. He grows apples and produce. He has been working there for about 40 years.

I was amazed. I am 45, and he looks a lot younger than that.

Fay Leavitt is a farmland protection advocate from Lincoln and she was at one of my meetings in Addison County just recently.

Mr. Chairman, the witnesses are yours.

Senator JEPSEN. Why don't we just go from our right to their left? We will start with Fay Leavitt.

Senator LEAHY. Just for those who want to know these little things, I am sitting to Senator Jepsen's right.

STATEMENT OF FAY LEAVITT, FARMLAND PROTECTION ADVOCATE, LINCOLN, VT.

Ms. LEAVITT. For the record, my name is Fay Leavitt. I am from Lincoln, Vt., and I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for including me in your hearing process.

Sir, I live in a town with a population of 800 people. Because most Vermont towns are small, there is a need to lean on State and Federal regulations and policies for advice and support.

I am here today representing 19 farmers who own large dairy operations in central Vermont. It is called precisely the Mad River Valley.

I would like to submit with my written testimony a letter written by the 19 farmers directed to Steve Harper, who is the floor supervisor of the Green Mountain National Forest here in Vermont. I was going to read the farmers' letter, but do realize the timeframe involved.[1]

Because there is a problem with the timeframe, fitting everything in, I will try to just summarize the farmers' letter as briefly as possible. I am referring to the farmers' letter submitted to the district office.

The 19 valley farmers have made publicly known their fear for the loss of their rented land in the valley region as a result of pressure from an endorsement by the USDA Forest Service. There will be pressure due to population influx in that area for development and municipal demands that also create pressures for development.

The farmers are very concerned about the rented parcels of land in that area. The letter also cites Public Law 97-98 and the protection policy. The statement that is referred to is the section where it states that the Department of Agriculture and other Federal agencies should take steps to insure that actions in the Federal Government do not cause U.S. farmland to be irreversibly converted to nonagricultural uses.

Again, it is a new policy problem that we are dealing with here. In my written testimony, which I will be submitting to have copies to the Senate committee, I would like to point out that there is an error, a typing error.

It should read:

> Mark B. Lapping, for the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, the Agriculture of the Mad River Valley; Present Conditions and Futures, 1979, has stated that increased development in the Mad River Valley region would encourage

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[1] As of press release date the material was not received by the committee.

subsequent farmland loss due to encroachment pressures resulting in the destruction of the critical mass.

I am here to document this information, to help formulate a consensus nationally that there are existing conflicts within the Department of Agriculture and that this case is truly one that should be considered when section 1541 of Public Law 97-98 is addressed. Should I not take time to recite that?

Senator **Leahy**. That is OK.

Ms. **Leavitt**. It is just a review process of the farmland.

Senator **Leahy**. Incidentally, Fay, what we do for the final record that we put together is send you a copy of it and make sure that everything that you want included is in there.

Ms. **Leavitt**. Right. I do have written testimony. I do have copies of farmers' letters. In view of the time, I thought it would be better to summarize this.

Senator **Leahy**. Thank you.

Ms. **Leavitt**. Vermonters are now watching and responding to encroachment pressures, but presently there is no comprehensive plan in place. However, a review process has been ongoing with recommendations for a board authority.

It has been stated by many that until that comprehensive plan is in effect here in Vermont, we have Act 250 which is a piecemeal approach and cannot presently be effective to protect farmland.

As is stated by John Keegan, who is actually involved in the ag land study, 1979 to 1981, and from the Regional Environment Research Institute in Philadelphia, Pa. His report is included in the reference guidebook which is part of the ag land study.

I guess, probably, to wind up my statement and save you all a little bit of time, if I could just read a paragraph from his statement. He has reviewed the Act 250 process which is State law, but it does cause problems in trying to apply regional concepts, especially for protecting farmland.

> The preservation of primary agricultural soil in Vermont cannot be achieved through the operation of Act 250 alone. A principal problem with the act is its limited jurisdiction. Most of the development in the State has not come before the district environmental permit. Most districts are large enough to require an Act 250 permit. Protection of primary agricultural soils requires a coordinated strategy of development rights, acquisitions, regulation, planning, and support for the agricultural economy. Some of the elements of the coordinated strategy are currently in place, but many of the support elements are not.

Senator **Leahy**. Thank you. The Act 250 that she refers to, Mr. Chairman, are the overall environment acts here in Vermont. It is one of the toughest and most comprehensive environment laws in the Nation.

Ms. **Leavitt**. I guess in ending my 5 minutes—I hope I have not gone over—I would like to state that Mad River Valley region is a region of great concern to the valley residents and responded negatively to the planned proposal with a ratio of 15 to 1.

I would like to thank you for including me, again, in the hearing process and wish to end my testimony by saying that in Vermont our most vulnerable and valuable resource for a sound ecosystem and economic base is our Vermont farmland. The 19 dairy farmers of the Mad River Valley recognize that they are, indeed, threatened by the final decision interests with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and sound policy. Thank you very much.

Senator Jepsen. Thank you, Fay. Our next witness will be Robert C. Wagner, land use specialist, Vermont Department of Agriculture. You may proceed, Mr. Wagner.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT C. WAGNER, LAND USE SPECIALIST, ON BEHALF OF COMMISSIONER GEORGE DUNSMORE, VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. **Wagner**. Senator Jepsen, I would like to welcome you to Vermont; and, Senator Leahy, I would like to welcome you home.

I am speaking on behalf of Commissioner George Dunsmore who could not be here today. He extends his best wishes to you and thanks you for recognizing the importance of New England agriculture by giving us the opportunity to express our thoughts on the RCA program.

Agriculture holds a very special place here in Vermont, as I'm sure Senator Leahy is aware. Although we may be nicknamed "The Green Mountain State," it is our agriculture that shapes and defines the unique character and environment of Vermont. Our agriculture industry affects nearly every facet of life in Vermont, from our respect for the land to the development of our modern economy, from our recreational opportunities to the rest of the Nation's perception of our small State.

Despite our small size, Vermont farmers devote 20 percent or over 1.1 million acres of our land base to productive agricultural use. This represents the highest allocation of land to agriculture of any New England State.

In 1982 the farmers of this State produced close to $400 million worth of farm products. This is an impressive figure when you consider that our yearly general fund is a mere $312 million.

Our dairy farmers amply supply our own dairy needs while providing 41 percent of the needs of our New England neighbors. New England is a deficit milk market, I might add.

Sheep have returned to graze on our hillside pastures; and fruit and vegetable farmers, particularly right here in the Connecticut River Valley, have achieved tremendous success by using innovative techniques to extend their growing seasons and aggressively promoting and marketing their products.

Certainly the food-producing benefits of Vermont agriculture are very important, especially in a region of the country that must insure local sources of food. But the benefits to our environment are no less significant and should not be overlooked.

Vermont farmers are the stewards of our land and water resources. In the process of good productive land management, our farmers help conserve water resources, preserve wildlife habitat, manage flood plains, and protect the future productive capacity of the land.

The ability of Vermont farmers to effectively and efficiently manage their lands is in part a tribute to their hard work and resourcefulness. However, without the assistance provided by the USDA in the development and implementation of conservation practices, the job would be extremely difficult if not impossible.

Here in Vermont we have always enjoyed a good working relationship, a partnership, with the State's USDA family. This is not only at the individual farmer level, but at local and State government levels.

We are, to say the least, anxious to see what the continued role of the USDA will be in Vermont under the national conservation program.

The program does have some very noteworthy elements. For example, we commend the emphasis placed on strengthening the role of existing local and State agencies and organizations in conservation efforts and their relationship with the USDA, and we certainly recognize the need to identify critical resource concerns to direct future funding allocations.

Unfortunately, we feel the decisions to set national priorities and to target conservation dollars to the top national concerns of soil erosion control and water conservation and upstream flood control in essence undermine the good points of the program.

By targeting USDA assistance to priorities defined by the program, the very unique conservation needs of a region and the idea of giving local and State organizations more of a hand in directing conservation efforts are reduced in their importance. The decisions as to which resource concerns will be priorities should be left to the individual States and localities.

In Vermont, for example, under the national program, the specific needs of improving water quality and protecting fragile soils would not receive the attention we feel they deserve.

These are concerns that are important to the maintenance of both our agriculture industry and, also, to our environment. Mr. Noel and Mr. Eaton, who are on the Vermont panel with me today, will discuss more specifically these two resource needs.

As I have said before, the support of Federal conservation programs is crucial in Vermont, and we are fearful that these programs will suffer under the national program's targeting formula. As funds are redirected to those areas of the country that exhibit the national priority problems, it can only result in a reduction in the assistance available to untargeted regions.

The State of Vermont, therefore, proposes that action be taken to maintain the current level of USDA assistance here in the State and that the criteria for targeting be revamped to reflect unique State and local resource priorities and that the funds for these targeted concerns represent new moneys so that existing, successful conservation efforts are not sacrificed. We feel that our soil and water resources and certainly those of the Nation deserve as much.

Vermont is proud of its association with the USDA, and we feel that the national conservation program does not reflect the potential of the Department to support agriculture in the State, from water quality improvement programs to soil potential studies, from conservation tillage practices to supplying local and State decisionmakers with the tools and data necessary to make wise land use decisions.

This is certainly in light of the recent passing and nonimplementation of the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act.

We were encouraged by Secretary John Block's recognition of the importance of New England's small farms to the Nation's agriculture. We hope that our resource needs will receive the same recognition and support from the USDA. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Bob. Next is Richard Noel. I was visiting with him this morning, and I told him that I was born and raised on a farm and that my brother and his sons were now farming our family farms.

Next year we are going to have a century farm. This means in Iowa that this farm has been continually farmed for 100 years by my family.

I thought that was pretty good. But he said his farm has been farmed for a little over 300 years. That is three-quarters of a century before we became a nation. I am not going to talk about Iowa farms anymore.

Senator **Leahy**. There are times when Dick thinks he has been farming it for all 300 years. I hope you might come up and see the area because it is a very, very pretty area.

He has as much to be proud of as anyone. I know the area well. I know the farm well.

Our late colleague Hubert Humphrey once came and traveled around that area. He was welcomed as an absolute hero by everybody no matter what their political affiliation might be.

He had a great time, and they still talk about that visit. I want you to know that Senators get treated well up there.

Senator **Jepsen**. Good.

Senator **Leahy**. I find visiting Senators get treated a lot better than I do. You should come up there.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD NOEL, DAIRY FARMER, HIGHGATE CENTER, VT. AND PRESIDENT, VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. **Noel**. Senator Leahy, Senator Jepsen, respected staff members. My name is Richard Noel, which everybody just pointed out. I am a dairy farmer from Highgate Center, Vt., which is in Franklin County. That is 200 miles from here right tight to the Canadian border. We have 80 dairy cows and 60 young stock.

I am also the president of our State Association of Conservation Districts. I want to thank you for providing this opportunity to discuss the effects of the RCA program in Vermont and for recognizing the fact that Vermont has agriculture.

I commend the USDA on its efforts to identify our Nation's resource problems and to target funds to critical areas. Attempting to strengthen the partnership between Federal, State, and local conservation agencies and organizations is also praiseworthy.

I am concerned, however, that several aspects of the national program fails to recognize Vermont. We have a valuable agriculture worth protecting. We are very proud of having strong family farms in our State. Most of our farms are run by the family: father and son, husband and wife; not by the big commercial operations which seem, unfortunately, to be the national trend.

Our dairy farms in Vermont supply 41 percent of the milk consumed in New England, and we do not have a surplus in this region. In Vermont we are dedicated conservationists. We have to be with a short growing season; fragile soils; wet areas from springs and a lot of water running downhill, water that carries away our topsoil and yet causes reduced production because of wetness. I looked at that the other night. When does water run uphill?

Water management is as important in the Northeast to improve production on the less erosive, wet soils as it is in the irrigation regions of the country.

You will find that we make very effective use of the Federal conservation assistance we receive. Each of our 14 conservation districts works very closely with the USDA people in our State. Their assistance is very valuable to us.

For over 40 years we have been helping USDA achieve their goal to strengthen the Federal, State, and local partnership in conservation. Let me describe what I see as problems with the national soil and water conservation program.

First, targeting is the right idea, but the concept should include all six of the USDA long-term objectives. In Vermont, as in most of New England, improving water quality and water management are critically important.

Reducing soil erosion is also important, but the criteria for providing assistance do not adequately take into account the relationship between soil erosion and crop productivity. If they did, Vermont's croplands would be targeted areas.

We grow our crops in relatively thin soils. That means every inch is valuable to us. Some areas of the country—and I have been to other areas—talk about top soil in feet. In our area we talk about top soil in inches. With all the rain we had in the last few weeks, we don't have too much left. But the targeting criteria are not sensitive enough to this.

Our median soil loss in Vermont is 8 tons per acre annually compared to 12 tons per acre in the deep Midwestern soils. The University of Minnesota says that these Midwestern soils with an annual erosion rate of 12 tons per acre would lose less than 10 percent of their crop productivity in 200 years.

At our rate in Vermont on our eroding soils, we would have a 10-percent loss in only 15 years. Right now, 102,000 acres of the 600,000 acres of cropland we farm are eroding so fast that crop productivity is being carried away with it.

Where are we going to go if all we have is sterile, unproductive subsoil or worse yet bedrock only a few years from now? Targeting should consider fragile soils like ours and those areas should be targeted, too.

We have a request in to USDA for fiscal year 1985 to target the Connecticut River Valley for its soil erosion problems. That would help, but we also have problems on the other side of the State in the Lake Champlain Valley. Many of the farms are cropping their more erosive, better drained soils to compensate for poor yields they obtain from their wetter, less erosive soils.

You will notice I said wet, less erosive soils, not swamp or wetlands. They need assistance to improve water management on the wet fields. This will enable them to more efficiently farm the wetter soils and cease row crop production on the more erosive, fragile soils.

This year, our Governor provided a modest increase in the State's fiscal year 1984 allocation to aid conservation district activities. We are thankful for that, but we will still be a long way from meeting the demand for conservation assistance in Vermont.

Water quality improvement is another conservation objective we need assistance with; 99 percent of all Vermonters who responded to the RCA questionnaire strongly support improving water quality. But this is not among the top national priorities.

Unless the national program is modified to recognize the importance of protecting the water resource in this region, I fear that we may lose some of the Federal assistance we presently have. Chet Eaton will talk more about this later.

Just to clarify my testimony, let me repeat what the problems are with the national RCA program and what would help solve them.

First, more technical and financial assistance should be provided to strengthen our continuing efforts, to conserve soil and water resources.

Second, the targeting criteria for soil erosion are too narrow. They should more fully take into account fragile soils such as those in Vermont and recognize the importance of providing resources to protect them. At the very least our fiscal year 1985 request to target the Connecticut River Valley should be granted.

Third, the national program may neglect the high Vermont priority for protecting and improving water quality. Federal assistance for this important State priority should not be reduced.

Fourth, agriculture water management is needed in Vermont so that we don't have to use our critically eroding cropland. Farmers are intensely cropping steeper and more erosive land instead of fields that have wetness problems. Assistance to improve production of wet soils will reduce erosion losses on steep, fragile soils. Water management is as important in Vermont as irrigation is in other regions of the country.

Thank you, again, Senator Leahy and Senator Jepsen for being concerned enough about our unique resource conservation needs in the Northeast to provide this opportunity to testify. We value our soil and water resources and need to have the continued support of USDA to adequately care for them. Thank you very much.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you. Now, we will go to Chester Eaton who is the treasurer for the—I am not going to attempt the next word.

Mr. EATON. It is Ottauquechee.

Senator JEPSEN. He is the treasurer for that conservation district. What does that word mean?

Mr. EATON. Running water?

Senator LEAHY. Before they allowed me to run for the Senate up here, I had to learn to pronounce that. It almost stopped my political career right there.

Senator JEPSEN. You may proceed.

Mr. EATON. I would like to fortify my testimony with an album that I put together of what I call the priorities of practices that are in our district. Would you like these?

Senator LEAHY. Yes, please.

STATEMENT OF CHESTER EATON, DIRECTOR, OTTAUQUECHEE CONSERVATION DISTRICT, HARTLAND, VT.

Mr. EATON. The four areas that are there are also put into the record, so they are identified for the record.

Senator Leahy, Senator Jepsen, respective staff members. I have been operating a diversified farm in the Connecticut River Valley for about 40 years. I am a natural resources conservation district supervisor and am active in local government and other statewide agricultural organizations. I have been a supporter and beneficiary of Federal conservation programs for a long time. Thank you for giving me a chance to air my feelings about the RCA program.

We can all take pride in the accomplishments of the national conservation movement since President Roosevelt promoted soil and water conservation districts. It has been a great benefit to agriculture nationwide, although we in Vermont are most familiar with the results we have seen in our home State.

The RCA program has now become the key to continued success of the conservation movement. It sets the tone and direction of Federal conservation efforts for the next several years and hopefully will be able to keep the momentum going.

Let me briefly highlight some of the basic program accomplishments in each district. You have this in front of you documented in the album. There is the technical assistance for soil drainage on the Lemax Farm in Hartland and St. John Farm in Pomfret.

The issue that I brought your attention to in those two projects is that the land is being grazed in close proximity of these farms. The choice has to be made to maximize the productivity of this land or drive 10 miles down the road to operate somebody else's land.

The waste management structures identified there are to size them up. I think the important issue is that this is five different solutions to structures that are different and tailor made to each situation where they are.

That includes taking care of waste management from the operation, that runoff from these intensified areas does not get into the streams nearby.

There are two examples of streambank stabilization. These are RCA projects that actually benefit the urban population where these projects are more than agriculture.

But these projects did stabilize streambanks for several homes that are in the area. Also, it stabilized the banks for public utilities that are in the areas.

The final program there is on my own home farm and is kind of a new technology that is coming into Vermont.

It is a picture of an old drill. There are problems with that drill that need to be worked out: How we are going to use it, how it will work in different areas of the State?

But it does allow steep slopes and cropland to be reseeded in a timely manner to maximize the production that can be realized from our soils and maintain the soils in these areas.

It is possible to reseed these steep slopes and cropland areas with a minimum loss of soil which is less than 3 acres against as much as 20 acres that we can see being lost during the winters on open land left out to crop.

To reseed we would have to cover the soil.

These are examples of what we have been able to do with Federal and State support of the conservation programs.

The RCA program seems to be basically sound from a national viewpoint, but for Vermont and New England the plan needs some adjustment. As Dick Noel stated, "Vermont has some rather unique conservation needs."

One, is that we have very fragile soils. With our steep slopes and shallow topsoil layers, a loss of a few inches of soil which is minor by national standards can be much more harmful to productivity than the same loss from the deeper soils of the Midwest.

My feeling is that targeted funds for soil erosion should be directed to areas where the loss in soil productivity is more severe. This adjustment would better address the erosion problems of our fragile Vermont soils.

Dick mentioned that a targeting proposal has been submitted to request funding to address soil erosion in the Connecticut River Valley. This is an important proposal that needs favorable Federal action to accelerate soil erosion control in this important agricultural region.

Another unique need comes from Vermont's strong statewide interest in improving water quality. Although water quality improvement is one of the several priorities in the national program, it is clearly the top priority in Vermont with soil erosion control holding a close second. Our State's water is our most precious natural resource and maintaining its quality has an effect on every aspect of life in Vermont from agriculture and industry to recreation and tourism.

Much has been done through various State and Federal pollution control programs to reduce pollution of the waters by urban areas and rural communities. The agriculture industry needs help to do its part in the effort by reducing pollution from farm activities.

There are 3,300 dairy farms in Vermont. These account for over 300,000 dairy animals. They produce 4½ million tons of manure annually. This manure represents a fertilizer value of over $4 million a year if properly utilized. But much of it is not.

Conscientious farmers are spreading the manure and incorporating it into soil. This increases their soil productivity and reduces the flow of nutrients and bacteria to lakes and rivers. The problem is that manure needs to be stored so that it can be spread and incorporated into the soil at the proper time.

Our State SCS office has identified about 2,500 dairy farms that need some kind of storage facilities. The structures are very expensive to build. Only about 700 facilities have been completed so far. We need the continued support of the Federal conservation programs to accomplish this.

The national program sets the top national priorities of soil erosion control, water conservation and upstream flood control. It directs special assistance to these national priorities. Soil erosion control, water conservation and upstream flood control are extremely important problems.

Here in Vermont, we consider our waste management and water quality improvement needs to be just as critical. It is a serious problem that requires immediate attention, and we need enough resources to provide solutions.

The national program targets USDA resources to areas of the country where priorities, as defined in the program, can best be met. Redirecting resources to targeted areas translates to a loss of resources in untargeted areas. Targeting resources as outlined in the plan could cost Vermont 25 percent or more of the current level of technical and financial assistance now available.

Action must be taken to maintain current level of assistance in untargeted areas and targeting criteria must be revised to better reflect State and local priorities.

Further, targeting should represent a special emphasis deserving special funding. It should never be done at the expense of successful ongoing conservation programs.

In summary, as a nation we must place a higher priority on conserving our natural resource base. Thank you.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Thank you. I have one question that I have asked now going on 5 years at conservation hearings. I would like to ask that question of you. Any of you on the panel can respond. Try to do so, please, with a yes or no.

In your opinion, should soil and water conservation programs be required to be integrated with any farm programs that are offered to you to take part in by the folks who are the recipients? The question is: Should soil conservation programs be voluntary or mandatory? I have changed the wording a little bit.

Do you want to lead off with that, Chester?

Mr. **EATON**. Right. My feeling is that we set this program up to work with individuals, and we really need to make these programs work.

The cooperation of individuals is really the thrust of the conservation programs, so my answer would be that my own personal point of view is that, no, it should not.

Senator **JEPSEN**. No, it should not be mandatory or required?

Mr. **EATON**. No.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Richard?

Mr. **NOEL**. Well, to answer your question, I don't think there is a definite yes or no. I can see your point; I can see Chet's point; but a reward for conservation effort would be more like it.

Senator **JEPSEN**. You want to persuade them, to give incentives so as to——

Mr. **NOEL**. Yes, take advantage of it.

Senator **JEPSEN**. But you are still willing to give tax dollars to those who do not partake in soil practices and get the tax dollars?

Mr. **NOEL**. Well, if you put it that way, no.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Well, I was not trying to load it. I did not discuss it much beforehand.

I hear you saying yes or no. It could be either way. Incentives are your preference?

Mr. **NOEL**. Yes.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Like a carrot on the end of a stick?

Mr. **NOEL**. Yes.

Mr. **WAGNER**. I think I would have to go along with Dick's answer, but I think I would be a little bit more aggressive in support of cross-compliance with programs.

Senator **Jepsen**. That is another word, cross-compliance.

Mr. **Eaton**. I agree with Bob, too, like the FHA loans. I think if you are going to get Government moneys to run an operation, you should comply with some of the Government specifications of soil conservation.

Mr. **Wagner**. In Vermont if a forest owner wants to get tax breaks on his forest land, he must comply or must have an improved forest management plan developed to comply with the current use value program. We have done this in Vermont and have been very successful here.

Senator **Jepsen**. Fay?

Ms. **Leavitt**. It depends on what the objective is. I guess if the objective is protection, I can see where it would be helpful.

Senator **Jepsen**. The objective is to conserve our soil. A little background on this is that there is a growing awareness and, subsequently, a growing concern for the very serious problem of the erosion of soil in this country.

Ms. **Leavitt**. The rate of erosion.

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes, the problems vary geographically across the country. Having said that, with this increased awareness in mind, I simply ask the question to you: If you are going to receive any type of funds from any type of Government program, should there be a requirement to receive these funds whether it be for FHA loans or for commodity grain programs? Should they be required to partake and to integrate some soil conservation practices, of course, where it is needed?

Ms. **Leavitt**. I think I can concur with Dick that efficiency incentives would stimulate that. I don't know. I have not studied that. These fellows would be more authoritative in that area.

Senator **Jepsen**. I would like to start with you and go back quickly the other way. Who should pay for conservation? The farmers, the consumers? From whom should the payment be collected? In other words, whose business is it?

Ms. **Leavitt**. It is overall an international policy. I do feel that we have rights as individuals to protect—and if we have to do it through the taxation system, so be it—to protect the overall national policy.

I feel that is important, that we look at it as a total picture, concept. In terms of commodities, I think that is especially important.

Senator **Jepsen**. All right. Do you want to respond to that, Bob?

Mr. **Wagner**. I think the responsibility of maintaining our resources—as both of you gentlemen realize, the responsibility for food in our country, the fact we may not always be as bountiful as we have been—I think it is important for all citizens in the country to be involved in that program. The farmers are the stewards of the land, but we all benefit.

Senator **Jepsen**. That word, benefit in other words, it is logical that people who benefit should participate in paying?

Mr. **Wagner**. Exactly.

Senator **Jepsen**. So conservation is everybody's business? Is that what you are saying?

Mr. **Wagner**. That is what I am saying.

Mr. **Eaton**. I have a little point to make. Somebody asked me once—he was going to play the devil's advocate—he said a chemical company was on a river dumping into the river. Whose responsibility is it to clean up the river?

Immediately I said the chemical company. He said, then whose responsibility is it, if you are a farmer, to take care of manure in the river? It seemed to be the Government's responsibility.

I said, you give me the profit of the chemical company, and I will take care of it.

Senator **Jepsen**. I have heard that before in Iowa that people say, we have to have a profit before we pay for these.

When you talk about conservation, they say, if we are going to be paying for it, we need to make a profit. That is what you said, I think.

Mr. **Eaton**. I think you continued to ask for maybe answers to very complicated questions. With yes or no, you are going to hear a little bit of discrepancy.

Senator **Jepsen**. Senator Leahy and I have to deal with this, and we have to bite the bullet, make decisions, and do something, and advocate something, follow through and try to get answers to questions.

For the record, I am asking you to give us some direction in guiding us, but it also gives you an idea of what we go through every single day. The buck kind of stops with us.

As chairman of Soil Conservation Subcommittee I am going to be making recommendations, and they may or may not have some impact on policy.

So the last two questions are very basic, but they are very keen. As far as soil conservation and resources, who should pay for it, the landowner who is farming it or everyone who benefits from it? What I guess we are asking is: Who should pay for it?

Mr. **Eaton**. My preference is to divide the issue up a little bit so you have got maybe some handle that you can get a hold of.

I think there are very clear public responsibilities on the national level and the State level in maintaining the ability to feed ourselves.

I also see specific responsibilities of the farmer as he is the steward of the soil. I would prefer to see very clear lines drawn to establish what the public's responsibility is and address the issue simply in that area.

I think those responsibilities are probably fairly broad and should be dealt with in that manner. As far as my preference, I think my point of view, to specifically answer the question you posed, would be that the farmer really should be charged with paying the bill for conservation practices; but I think he does deserve to have the support of the public to provide whatever assistance he needs, whether it is technical assistance to get that done or take the example of no storage bins in Vermont. Every time that we look at a situation, it is going to require a different solution.

Now, I think it is the public's responsibility to provide whatever assistance that farmer would need to take care of that problem.

Senator **Leahy**. I think the question you just asked was about the most basic one because we do have to wrestle with that one, unfortunately, so often.

So often the votes come up and we have to vote on the questions. We have to vote almost a simple yes or no, either vote aye or nay, when so many times we would like to vote 53 percent aye and 47 percent nay.

There is no way of doing that. I mentioned that because I think, as you just pointed out, a lot of these things are not yes or no answers. Unfortunatly, we get caught in a bind of having to vote yes or no.

I have just one question to ask and, Bob, maybe I will ask it of you. You talked about the other national priorities, first, the fact they do not really fit Vermont all that well.

If you were asked to name the priorities for Vermont, what would they be?

Mr. **Wagner**. I do not think I can rank these specifically one and two, but I would have to say our most important concerns are water quality and improvement which is important not only for the farmer because he gets a benefit through the whole process of being able to handle the manure better and put more fertilizer down at reduced costs on his land.

Then, also, there is the recreational aspect to the State. Also, certainly soil erosion is a problem here in Vermont, but it is the fragility of our soils that is the problem, and the criteria in the national program for defining soil erosion problems is a concern of Vermont.

Senator **Leahy**. You are saying we do not fit in any kind of an average for soil erosion?

Mr. **Wagner**. I never thought of Vermont as being average in any aspect.

Mr. **Leahy**. I appreciate your testimony and Fay's and Dick's and Chet s, and I cannot help but think that down in Washington we so often hear just what I called the professional testifiers.

We see the same faces appearing on half a dozen subcommittees for whatever reasons. People here though, are the people that really have to make the programs go and people who are affected by the programs as individual farmers and individual landowners. Fay, the way she is concerned about what happens to the land; Bob has got to help run the programs at the State level and realize that our State problems may be a lot different than what is envisioned on the national program level.

Chet is trying to keep a diversified farm going and keep up the farmlands, Dick's testimony is the most powerful testimony I have heard in this regard, and the record is sometimes dry on that.

I would hope that every member of the Senate would feel the emotion and strong feelings you have for the value of a family farm. I think the chairman and I sympathize with that very readily because of our own backgrounds.

It is sometimes those who live totally in an urban area who do not understand how important this is to our country. They whould hear that.

Every one of our colleagues should be required to sit and listen to that kind of testimony periodically.

Thank you all for being here. I will turn this back to the chairman.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. As I indicated earlier, we will be going by State with Vermont having been No. 1. New Hampshire will be second; New York, third; Connecticut, fourth; and Rhode

Island will be fifth. Massachusetts will be sixth. As it says somewhere in the Good Book, "first should be last as last goes, and as Maine goes, so goes the Nation." So Maine will be seventh.

Now, before the panel for New Hampshire comes forward, very quickly, Chester, you mentioned that you needed storage facilities for manure; is that right?

Mr. **Eaton**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Is that because of the hills here in Vermont? We were born and raised on a dairy farm. You take the manure out, clean the barns out. As long as the land was frozen, you could at least give part of it away.

We hauled it out and put it on the land. In the spring thaw, it went into the land nicely and so on.

Our storage was just one big pile, one big heap. What did you have in mind when you say storage? Is that inside storage of some kind? Is it pit storage?

You said there was a need and it was a necessary thing.

Mr. **Eaton**. Yes. When I say storage, it can be a place to put it. It can be utilized when you need it. There are two reasons for that.

First, it is awful hot in the summer. If you spread it in the summer, you lose nutrients.

Also, if you spread the manure on the ground in the spring, the majority of that will leach into the streams and lakes and rivers.

By having a place to store this stuff—I mean, when it rains, the water comes off the hills and comes down the roads. Any place that a cow walks, there is going to be a lot of mud and everything else that a cow spreads around.

The water goes through that and into the streams. Any place you look in Vermont, is different.

Senator **Jepsen**. I would like to hear about some of your ideas on that on special, maybe, correspondence or something like that.

Senator **Leahy**. I think you will find that there is no average topography here in Vermont.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very much. Now, New Hampshire, please.

John Conner is president of New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts. Stephen Taylor is commissioner of New Hampshire Department of Agriculture.

Gentlemen, I welcome you. I know that Senator Humphrey would warmly extend his best wishes and thank you for coming.

John Conner or Stephen Taylor, decide between you which one will lead off.

STATEMENT OF JOHN CONNER, PRESIDENT, NEW HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, LONDONDERRY, N.H.

Mr. **Conner**. Good morning. My name is John Conner. I am the president of New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts. I am going to read my talk pretty well the way it is written, otherwise I might get confused.

New Hampshire, with a population of 931,700, has 3,300 agricultural growers and producers with annual farm receipts of $90 million. These growers and producers can apply for complete conservation programs. The people of New Hampshire deserve produce of quality and freshness which cannot be obtained from the West.

We have heard it said that the West and Midwest will grow the food for the whole country. I hope all thinking people realize that to depend entirely on this source for our food would be risky.

Remember the oil embargo? Result: high prices and shortages. Or the trucking strike that left our grocery store shelves empty and Western crops rotting in the field? Or the grain embargo that just about bankrupt our Midwest farms?

We must remember our history; a Nation which destroys its soil, destroys itself. The soil is of the utmost importance to New Hampshire. I, personally, have a little trouble justifying the system of our Government subsidizing programs to farmers: to grow or not to grow, to produce or not to produce. I don't want this to sound bad, but it is just another form of welfare.

But, we must retain and improve our soil, and we had better take a long hard look at where the money will come from. It is the duty of every American to support this endeavor by financing Government programs or volunteering to work locally. We must save that which has made this country great: Agricultural productiveness.

The first category of the RCA. I would like to address is erosion. When all the discussion is concluded, all the data tabulated, the determination is always the same: the soil is either washing or blowing away.

We must stop this relentless loss with new and better conservation practices or we will have the dust bowls of the thirties all over again. With the RCA formula New Hampshire ranks 48th to the rest of the States in funds for erosion control. We have done a very good job of taking care of our soils in New Hampshire. We are now being shut down because of it. The result is that our State is projected to lose 18.4 percent in conservation operating funds.

Soil is very shallow in New Hampshire, only inches deep in areas. We cannot afford to lose any soil. Midwestern soil can run as deep as 50 feet or more. It does erode faster but there is a lot more of it. I believe the conservation of New Hampshire soil is more important; there is so very little; we must retain all of it.

We, in New Hampshire, also have the problem of prime farmland conversion pressure. Most of us, given the opportunity, would like to live in a beautiful farming community: fields of vegetables, apple orchards, cows and horses grazing in a meadow. If everyone lived in the country, the land would disappear, replaced with asphalt to transport the citizens and buildings to house them.

With the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 formula, prime farmland conversion pressure is only 1 percent of the total weight; and New Hampshire ranks second with this problem. Remember, we have almost a million people in our State; we must have prime farmland to produce good, fresh food for their consumption.

I would like to direct your attention to the minimum presence; we have an average of two people for each field office. If we are to have a good soil and water conservation program, I believe we will need more manpower for technical assistance for farmers. We need the money, of course, but we also need qualified people to educate us in the preservation of soil and water.

I could continue with my concern for our water, population, and reclamation areas. Instead, let me tell you about the people and what they have accomplished in New Hampshire. On the local level, we have organized conservation commissions which help their town cope with growing populations and vanishing wetlands.

In my town, after months of negotiation by the conservation commission, the poposal to buy and preserve 600 acres of wetland and forest for $450,000 was voted for affirmatively by the townspeople.

The county governments of New Hampshire have been very generous with financial help for the conservation districts enabling us to have clerical help, educational tools, and equipment. With this aid we can educate our citizens concerned with good conservation practices.

We can help towns and cities plan for the future, assist contractors with designing and constructing acceptable, attractive homes on lots other than those on prime farmland. And, we receive support from the State by way of the conservation committee which gives strength and direction to the conservation districts.

The people of New Hampshire want agriculture, water, and good soil. They have always made this unequivocally clear. I don't believe Senators, Congressmen, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, or the President of the United States should deny our State the good life we have worked so very hard for. I hope you will reconsider the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 program by diverting more funds to New Hampshire. Remember what crisp apples, mouth-watering strawberries, juicy tomatoes, fresh milk, and snappy beans really taste like. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Stephen Taylor.

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN TAYLOR, COMMISSIONER, NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONCORD, N.H.

Mr. **Taylor**. I have a brief statement here, Senator, that I would like to read. I have copies here for the clerks.

The national program for soil and water conservation issued by the Department of Agriculture last December contains many positive features which will benefit and enhance efforts to conserve soil and water resources of the Nation. I support the idea of taking a broad and sweeping look at all major Federal programs, and I feel the final program report represents a good faith effort on the part of the Department to address the need for periodic and careful review of important public service activities.

From the standpoint of the State of New Hampshire, and especially its agriculutral and forestry interests, there are some concerns which I have which I hope the subcommittee may examine more closely and possibly propose remedial legislation if such would be deemed to be in the public interest.

Targeting and grants both have a place in the funding of conservation activities in each State. I woud like to see the concept of targeting taken one step further so as to allow leaders within the

States to have a role in establishing priorities for the application of resources in meeting critical conservation problems.

Our State conservation committee is close to the grassroots problems, and its members are a valuable reservior of knowledge and talent that ought to be applied to the task of achieving the most public benefits with the funds, staff, and resources that are available to the State.

A particualr concern to me and many others in the conservation movement in New Hampshire is the failure of the formula methods used in the report to assess severity of erosion problems. There is a great difference between the deep soils of Iowa and the thin, fragile soils of upland New Hampshire. Our thin soils are extremely vulnerable even at relatively low ton-per-year rates, but the formulas used to establish criteria for funding fail to take this fact into account.

Our largest concern in New Hampshire is not with the test of the report or with targeting strategies or erosion rate calculations, however. Our major concern is that Washington is losing sight of the stakes that are involved in the conservation of our soil and water resources today.

Our soil conservation service program in New Hampshire today is operating with the barest minimum of staff and budget and its program is barely effective. In fact, it is effective largely because of the willingness of its staff to contribute time and effort well beyond what it is required to give. We have far fewer technicians today than we had 10 years ago, while demand for SCS technical assistance is expanding.

Farmers, the wood products industry, and the general public in New Hampshire don't need to be sold on the idea of soil and water conservation; these people are anxious to do more and more in the way of developing management plans, carrying out sound conservation practices and responsibly managing the resources they have. No longer do leaders in conservation have to worry about selling conservation to farmers and landowners. People realize today that conservation is good business as well as nice to do.

Evidence of the degree to which sound conservation practices are being followed is that a substantial part of the workload of our district conservationists around the State is for practices and projects that will be accomplished by farmers and landowners without any ~~help from the agri~~cultural conservation program. These people will spend money on these practices out of their own pocket if they can just get the technical assistance that only SCS can provide.

I hope that our leaders in Washington as they develop budget and appropriations priorities will keep in mind the fact that the security of our Nation is as fully dependent on our ability to feed our population as it is on armaments and that protection and preservation of our soils and water resources are absolutely essential for safeguarding our Nation's food supply. Thank you.

Senator Jepsen. Now, I have the same question for you. In your opinion, should soil and water conservation programs be required to be integrated with Federal commodities, support programs, farm loans, any programs whereby the landowners or those farming the land are recipients of Federal funds and programs? Should it be required?

Mr. TAYLOR. My response should be, yes, if it has been determined in the public interest to have these programs. It seems absurd if not ridiculous not to use whatever legal means that are available to get people to participate and comply with the objectives of national policies.

Senator JEPSEN. So if cross-compliance is mandatory, required, those terms do not frighten you?

Mr. TAYLOR. They do not frighten me. They frighten a lot of people, I realize; but I think it is a case here where you cannot have your cake and eat it, too.

If you are going to have a national policy for conservation, I think it behooves all of us, it certainly behooves farmers in the long run, to have cross-compliance.

Senator JEPSEN. Who should pay for conservation, farmers, consumers, taxpayers? How should such payments be collected and disseminated

Mr. TAYLOR. I guess Government does for us what we cannot all do for ourselves. Certainly, the kind of technical assistance soil conservations provides to farmers is something that farmers cannot provide themselves.

I think the evidence is clear and new that if the farmers are given the technical assistance that RCA provides, they will dig into their pockets and carry on practices that benefit the public.

Senator JEPSEN. Same question to John Conner.

Mr. CONNER. On your first question, I would agree with Steve completely. I really do believe that if you are going to receive money from the Government for whatever the reason is, you had better go by the law. I have no problem with this.

I firmly believe that conservation is very important to our land, soil, and water. If you are going to receive something else, then you better make sure that you are retaining our soil and water.

On your second question which was—what was your second question, please?

Senator JEPSEN. Who should pay for conservation?

Mr. CONNER. As I said in my testimony here, I believe that should be paid by every single taxpaper in the country.

It is a little bit different than subsidizing New York City or Chrysler Motors. This is soil that we cannot lose because it cannot be replaced. We have to have it.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you. By the way of interest, I might tell you that 5 years ago, 4 years ago, when I asked the same question as I did across the country, especially in the Midwest, about 90 percent, about 9 of 10 on that basis, people would respond, no, under no circumstances do we want anything required. It has got to be voluntary. That is the only way.

Over the last 4 years, I have asked this question each year at hearings to some of the same people, but many new ones, too.

It has changed now. It is about 9 to 10 the other way. As we have a growing awareness and concern about soil conservation, it has totally changed.

Being born and raised on a farm myself, one thing I know for sure is I do not like anyone telling me what I am supposed to being doing with my land or my farm or my property. Farmers are very independent, but I do not think they are any different than any other Americans when it comes to being concerned about their property.

With people who are homeowners, you will find an overwhelming majority of Americans will take care of their homes. They will paint them; they will keep them up, make sure that they do not get rundown.

There are certain percentages, for whatever reasons, that let them all go to shambles. We have the same situation with many who till the soil.

Some have always cared for it, and others have just used it and abused it, and continue to do so.

Unfortunately, as you have pointed out—and this is true with individuals all over the country—John, you feel very strongly that New Hampshire has done a pretty good job on conservation; and now you are losing 18.4 percent of the funds.

There are a number of individual farmers across this country who have tilled the land who feel the same way. They have paid out of their own pockets, taken care of their own bank accounts, of their own free will. They have been good stewards of the land; and now come the programs where they get this kind of help, this kind of support. They are getting nothing, not even a pat on the back.

We are going to try to change that and recognize that. I do not know what else we can do; but I hear what you are saying. It is an accurate observation that we will try to recognize that and do something about it as we go along.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you very much. I am going to ask the same question of whomever comes before us to testify. In Washington, do you feel the States and local conservation districts should have more of a say in setting their own priorities? Can that be done in the context of a national program?

Mr. CONNER. You know, it is a very hard thing where I know in Washington you are trying to turn more things back to the States or the people or whatever. Of course, we as a State keep coming back and asking for more things.

I would have an awful lot of trouble with this for the plain, simple reason, yes, it should go back to the States. Every State is different or, at least, in regions, they are different. We would know where to put the moneys or whatever to better use.

On the other hand, the one problem that I think I could see is that this is Federal money, and there are a lot of people that may not want to worry about what happens in our State. Maybe the Federal Government had better hold some reins on it. So, I cannot answer that too well.

Senator LEAHY. How comfortable do you feel with the national priorities that have been set out? How well do they reflect the needs of New Hampshire?

Mr. CONNER. Not too well.

Senator Leahy. Does it not mitigate toward setting those priorities as well?

Mr. CONNER. True.

Senator LEAHY. Your answer is basically the same?

Mr. TAYLOR. Yes.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony. It was sharp, precise, crisp, and to the point.

Senator **Leahy**. That is New Hampshire.

Senator **Jepsen**. The New York panel. I was most impressed with your agriculture reception held at the Capitol. Most people think of New York out in the Midwest as New York City and a cement jungle and all that sort of thing.

When I came to that perception, I think it was in a room that was filled with all of your agricultural products. It was super.

Quite frankly, I have discussed with Senators Moynihan and D'Amato about having a joint agricultural display put on by Iowa and New York. I think there would be many reasons we need to understand each other better and work together as agricultural States. I thank you for coming up here today.

Senator **Leahy**. I hesitate to add this, but here in Vermont that same agricultural fair you had down there was tremendous. My wife and I went to it. I got a little bit of ribbing from both Senators Moynihan and D'Amato afterwards.

Al D'Amato's office was right opposite mine. The Leahy family and members of the Leahy staff benefited by some of the surplus of that night. Because Al is a very generous person, we had a couple of big wicker baskets full of things to take home.

Both Al and Pat had a quid pro quo. I was not allowed to take off the New York labels before I brought them home.

It was a great fair. I think it was a eye opener to a lot of people. Certainly, it was to a lot of us on the Agriculture Committee.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. I would again remind you that your statements will be entered on the record as if read. You may proceed in any sequence that you so desire.

Please introduce yourselves and you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF ARLEIGH RICE, PRESIDENT, NEW YORK SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION, LOWVILLE, N.Y.

Mr. **Rice**. My name is Arleigh Rice, and there is a slight deviation from the scheduled program. Edgar King, deputy commissioner, will make the statement for Joseph Gerace. I will make a short opening statement followed by Deputy Commissioner King's statement and one from Phillip Griffen of the State committee followed by William Chamberlain, a businessman and Northeast area director of NACD.

My name is Arleigh Rice. I am a dairy farmer from Lowville, N.Y. I'm president of the New York Soil Conservation Districts Association. This association consists of 57 soil and water conservation districts representing all of the State except the five New York City counties.

I am pleased at the opportunity to appear and chair this New York panel.

A statement eloquently made by Senator Mark Hatfield about a year ago makes an appropriate opening for the New York presentations. Hatfield said:

> Our Nation's farmers are the most productive on Earth. They have helped feed the world's hungry and kept our domestic prices low. However, this is a trend that may not continue because of rising costs, loss of farmland to development and inequitable returns from the market.

I believe it is implied in the Senator's statement, but I would emphasize, the trend may not continue because of productivity losses resulting from erosion and misuse of our natural resources.

I am sure some of the following remarks will closely relate to this statement.

I would like to turn to Commissioner King now.

STATEMENT OF EDGAR KING, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS, ALBANY, N.Y.

Mr. KING. My name is Edgar King, and I am deputy commissioner of New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. I also happen to be a dairy farmer and user of services of soil conservation.

My purpose here today is to present a statement on behalf of Joseph Gerace, commissioner of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

The large population concentrations in New York City and the surrounding metropolitan area lead people to conclude that New York is principally an urban State, as you stated earlier. This is far from fact. Agriculture and related rural activities are very important to New York. We have the second highest rural population in the Northeast and the sixth highest in the country.

New York produced $2.7 billion of food crops in 1982. We were first in the production of cottage cheese and cream cheese, second, in production of apples, beets for canning, cabbage for kraut, sweet corn for market, Italian cheese, and maple syrup, third in milk, ice cream, cheese, grapes, snap beans, cabbage, cauliflower, corn for silage, and red Kidney beans. The attached sheet further expands on New York's agriculture.

Agriculture production in New York and the Northeast has advantages of national significance. Crops produced and distributed in this area require only minimal expenditures of energy for irrigation, refrigeration, processing, and transportation.

We are fortunate to have abundant rainfall. Furthermore, we have soils that respond well to improvement with agricultural water management practices. One-third of the Nation's population is easily serviced by our producers.

This, coupled with the fact that we are economically positioned near market centers, provides excellent opportunities for New York agriculture.

Agriculture is important to New York's health and economic well being. We want to keep it that way. In my judgment, increased agricultural self-reliance is very desirable.

The Northeast States are located close to exporting facilities with particular advantage for European markets. My concern with the Resource Conservation Act program report is that it does not address farmland preservation or rural area development.

Although the State has experienced a decline in total population, there have been substantial movements from urban sectors to the adjacent rural areas. This exerts severe pressure on our best farmland.

If we are to remain in a favorable agricultural export position, we must keep agriculture efficient and profitable. This is most easily accomplished on prime farmland. Such land is level or nearly level, well drained, and can be farmed intensively with little erosion.

Ironically, this same land is also considered prime for all other types of development. Thus, we experience great competition for our agricultural lands.

New York State has made major committments to preserve farmland. In 1982, the State contributed $250,000 to the soil survey program. Earlier in 1980, the State established an agricultural value assessment program to insure that agricultural soils were valued for their agricultural purposes and not other higher and more intensive uses.

In addition, the State has made major financial contributions to the soil and water conservation districts to help with their program related to the conservation practices needed for protection of our farmlands.

We are now providing farmland protection activities in 401,000 agricultural districts composed of over 7.5 million acres of land—nearly one-fifth of the total land area in New York State.

Suffolk County and its towns of Southold and Easthampton have an active program for the purpose of development rights as a means of preserving farmland. The county and towns have committed over $30 million to this effort.

Suffolk County, itself, was the first county in the Nation to make a commitment to purchase development rights, as a part of their intensive program to keep good farmland in agricultural uses.

The identification of prime farmlands relies heavily on soil survey and other resource data gathered by soil and water conservation districts and the Soil Conservation Service cooperative undertakings.

To continue to carry out an effective program of farmland preservation, prime farmland must be identified. Additional assistance is needed to map prime farmland soils, identify and disseminate other data pertinent to agricultural and farmland protection.

My department and many other State leaders recognize the need for an increase in rural develpment activities. It is logical that the U.S. Department of Agriculture RCA plan include provisions for this.

Rural communities seldom have sufficient resources to develop the expertise and information needed to adequately address their development needs. They need assistance in identifying such needs.

Some of these needs are employment opportunities, agrirelated business opportunities, improvement of public facilities, as well as improvement of infrastructure.

In addition, technical assistance, educational programs, and incentives provided by USDA need to be better understood and used by farmers as an integral part of the profitability structure earlier mentioned.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, I encourage your committee to consider supplementing the RCA report with sections addressing farmland preservation and rural development.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity you have provided me to present my thoughts on these critical issues. If the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets can be of assistance to help appropriately address and resolve these issues, we are available. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF PHILLIP GRIFFEN, NEW YORK STATE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION, STILLWATER, N.Y.

Mr. **Griffen**. My name is Phillip Griffen. I am dairy farmer from New York State. I represent the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.

Certain aspects of the Resources Conservation Act as advanced by the Secretary of Agriculture do not meet the soil and water conservation needs of the State of New York.

The administration of the act pretty much directs itself to soil erosion on the basis of amount of soil loss with administrative direction of erosion targeting on a national basis. It appears this hypothesis was developed on the base of the deep Western soils.

You should be advised that in the glacial soils of the Northeast, the fragile soils, many farmers are making a living on soils of a few inches in depth. To lose a half inch or inch of this type of soil affects the productivity of the farm considerably. We suggest in erosion consideration, productivity be a consideration as well as soil loss.

The national RCA program does not address the need for drainage or flood control except in a superficial way where it talks about water management in the upper watersheds.

Water management needs in the Northeast are extensive in drainage: 55 of New York's 57 districts have a drainage program and all have a concern and participate in flood control programs of one type or another.

The counties are providing $1.6 million direct to soil and water conservation districts to cost share for local drainage projects.

Irrigation lends itself generally to the West and Southwest. As urban pressures expand in the Southwest and with no way to replenish the aquifer, I would expect that in the long term—and not really to terribly long—we will see the citizen one vote rule put pressure on irrigated agriculture to the extent that the Northeast with its abundant supply of water will be viewed favorably as the agricultural production center for our Northeast population.

Our New York land and water should be protected now in keeping with the State RCA plan which has been developed and accepted by State agencies and the Governor's Soil and Water Conservation Committee.

I might add, the funds for the plan were provided through RCA. The national program needs to include considerations for water management via land drainage and flood control at the State level.

Certainly directing conservation activities to the worst first is a reasonable idea. The difficulty is that a worst first concept established in one or two categories at a national level may not meet the plans or needs at the State level. This concept might better be established at the regional or State level in keeping with our State developed RCA plans.

Funding from the national level to States to carry out their RCA soil and water projects could be a multiplying factor. In New York the counties contribute $2.1 million a year plus $0.5 million a year of State money and another $1.6 million from county government for special projects.

Most of this money goes for technical and project cost sharing to help solve soil and water problems. Federal grants to the State could at least double and possibly triple on-the-ground conservation programs. Thank you for this chance to present our testimony.

Senator **Jepsen**. Next is Mr. Chamberlain?

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, ADAMS, N.Y.

Mr. **Chamberlain**. Senator Jepsen, Senator Leahy, my name is William Chamberlain. Until recently I was a dairy farmer. I serve as chairman of the Jefferson soil and water conservation systems.

I serve on the national board of directors of the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts. Since I chair the urban committee for the national association, I probably will take a little different tack than most people.

Most of these speeches have been relating to agriculture. I would like to relate to the urban and suburban problems we have here.

In the testimony that Commissioner King has just given, he alluded to the large rural population.

We all know that New York also has a large urban and suburban population. In suburban areas significant development has taken place and continues.

In my discussion with local and county officials, I find some of the most irksome, troublesome, and insidious problems they face involve improper site work by developers. Soil related problems, improper storm water disposal and erosion control are among the identified problems. Often the problems do not show up until the developer has left.

Clogged culverts, malfunctioning sanitary waste systems, impaired drainage, wet cellars and flooding are left for owners and officials to cope with and haggle over.

Water quality is impaired, the environment is degraded; and unless remedial measures are undertaken, damage mounts up.

Knowledge of soil conditions, proper planning and design could have saved dollars, headaches, and heated exchanges.

A specialized planning expertise is needed to properly assess and provide needed technical assistance for erosion control and water disposal.

In many of the urbanizing counties of New York, the SCS and county soil and water conservation districts have provided the needed expertise. With site plan reviews, their advice on storm water management and erosion measures, many dollars have been saved.

County governments have contributed funding and other assistance. Districts and SCS have very successfully assisted local officials and individuals in identifying potential problem areas before they arise. I call these activities urban conservation.

My message to this oversight hearing is that the combination of a lower priority assigned by USDA to urban conservation and the targeting of withheld funds to areas of higher priority will very much decrease this needed conservation activity.

When this is coupled with the newly developed SCS conservation operations allocation formula, which gives minimal weight to urban conservation, we badly impact assistance in urban conservation.

Assistance will be withdrawn from those counties where over half of New York's population resides.

Urban and suburban areas have more taxpayers per square mile than any other land use. Urban conservation deserves a higher priority rating. It is an activity that should continue; it is needed.

As a member of the New York Environmental Planning Lobby, I have a high concern for water quality and maintenance of a quality environment.

Public Law 92-500 established clean water as a national objective. The expertise of districts and SCS most certainly has contributed to this objective. I am concerned that targeting will detract from the assistance provided in nonpoint source pollution control.

As far as environment is concerned, it is my opinion that a diverse land use contributes to quality environment. Trees, clean lakes and streams, woodland, villages, orchards and farmland all make for a diverse land use.

I am saying farmland contributes to diversity and hence to environmental quality. Agricultural landscape adds much beauty to a community.

To summarize, urban conservation and water quality need priority attention. Technical assistance in these areas needs to remain at least at its recent past level. Farmland preservation needs to be addressed in the RCA program plan. Thank you.

Mr. RICE. I have followed with interest the RCA process USDA went through in preparing the national program for soil and water conservation. I remember well the inventory phase in Lewis County, the meetings where public conservation concerns were voiced, and the New York summary of public response to the Secretary's draft program.

The process was logical, and it involved a good deal of coordination and public participation.

The panelists before me have discussed a number of concerns or oversites as they apply to New York. These were identified in the RCA process. I can generally agree with their statements and rationale.

By the national resource inventory land use in New York is approximately as follows: Six million acres, cropland; 2.3 million acres, pasture; 15.5 million acres, forest land; 3.6 million acres, urban; three million acres, other use. I guess you would say that holds it all together.

It is obvious that natural resource conservation concerns in New York are varied and diverse. In my opinion, New York districts have been relatively successful indentifying critical areas within their boundaries.

Evidences of this are their district long-range and annual plans and their ability to secure funding from local non-Federal sources. These efforts have led to a base level of staffing.

In my district our base staffing is two SCS employees and two district employees. It has been difficuit, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain local funds to maintain these staff numbers.

The concern of many districts is that the base level of staffing will be upset by targeting, particularly where locally identified needs do not coincide with national priorities. In other cases, the identified needs may coincide but not meet a threshold level of severity.

Assuming no targeted funds are returned to New York, the withdrawal of an additional 5 percent each year for 5 years, means a loss of 65-man years of assistance in the fifth year. If targeted funds are provided, obviously they will not be returned equally to each district. That 65-man loss is from a total man force in the field of 150.

Targeting is good and desirable. Indeed, it is in a sense done whenever districts set priorities. When targeting is done by withdrawing funds from the existing base program, then programs considered important at a local level are weakened.

Targeting should be done with new funds. This was an almost universal comment of the New York respondents to the Secretary's preferred program.

The feature of the USDA program which targets more funds and personnel to areas where erosion threatens the long-term productive capacity of soil and water warrants discussion.

New York conservationists and farmers are concerned that the selective criteria to be used in designating targeted areas may not recognize the shallow or fragile nature of soils in New York and New England. Use of gross soil loss erosion rates as the sole criteria for selection of targeted areas is improper.

A recent report to Congress by the Congressional Office on Technology Assessment points out, "Soil loss rates are not the same as productivity loss rates." It further states, "some farms with low erosion and thin soils may suffer more productivity loss than farms with high erosion but deeper soil."

New York soils, particularly those with less than 25 inches of rooting zone, are considered fragile in terms of their ability to remain productive even under moderate rate of soil loss.

New York's agricultural productivity is threatened by erosion rates that are much less than those in deeper soil regions. These factors need to be considered in the targeting of funds for erosion control.

A number of our districts have identified conservation treatment needs in New York's woodland. Some of New York's pastures and cropland need land use adjustment to less intensive use.

For instance, there are over 59,000 acres of cropland in land capability classes VI, VII, and VIII. Incentives are needed to make the land use adjustment so land is used within its capability.

We are in agreement with the feature of the Secretary's program which requires landowners to have a conservation plan in order to be eligible for FmHA loans.

To summarize, it is a soil and water conservation district's responsibility to develop a long-range program that recognizes the conservation needs and interests of the district citizens. We have done this.

In many cases, to these needs, we have supplemented Federal staffs with district employed personnel. The supplemented staff makes a district base staff. We are concerned targeting will diminish this base staff. Targeting should be done with new funds.

We agree the conservation plan should be a requirement for FmHA loans, and we favor use of incentive where land use adjustments are appropriate. Examples are cropland to pasture or cropland and pasture to woodland.

Where critical erosion is used to designate areas for special assistance, gross soil erosion rates should not be the sole criteria for designation. The sensitive shallow nature of the Northeast soils need to be considered.

The panelists before me have identified other conservation needs and interests of districts in New York. These need to be considered in your oversite responsibilities.

I appreciate this opportunity to have this presentation in front of your subcommittee. If I may, I would like to add some things we are very concerned about in New York. One of those things is the C0–01 formula, the readjustment of that.

About 40 percent of our staff base in New York State with the soil scientists developed what we know as soil loss impact.

Taking three of the more predominant soils across the State, taking rates of productivity, each soil had a different result.

We really believe that after the soil has been farmed for 300 years, we are not going to find topsoil.

Taking from a least a 20-inch depth of root zone—I wish I had that much soil on some of my farms—we found that some of these soils could be out of productivity, efficient productivity, using corn for grain and lowering to a base about where the unproductivity rate would be about 72 bushels an acre.

So, it would cut the efficient productivity where it would pay to return to the farmer within 44 years.

Even with the lost soils of the West—we are talking about several feet in depth—they are going to be in production hundreds of years down the line with very little loss of productivity, despite the rate of soil loss.

We have a 3-year grant from SCS to Cornell University to try and establish the relationship of soil depletion productivity on the soils.

What they are trying to do is to take 25 years of research and put it into 3. I think we are on the right track, and there is going to be an impact on the Northeast.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. What everyone here seems to be referring to without mentioning is in the name of soil tilth, which we are not up to speed on like we should be.

We do not have the research efforts in that area, how you reconstitute the soil, what makes the best combination of soil.

So, tilth is important in this area to Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York, and I suspect the other States that come along here because of the 300 years of farming.

It is needed to research and define what the makeup is of the soil you have left, in addition to erosion prevention and so on, but what type of procedures do you implement to bring back the productivity of the soil.

So, tilth is an area where I am putting the throttles all the way forward and trying to expand and expedite on with a great sense of urgency.

This morning, as I sit here listening to you, I realize that New England really ought to be looking at that with gusto.

I want to explore with you, Mr. King and Mr. Chamberlain, this prime farmland thing.

As a representative of the urban viewpoint, in your capacity in that, Mr. Chamberlain, I would like your comments and Mr. King's—but yours first—with regard to this prime farmland problem.

Who ought to control, who ought to set policy with regard to prime farmland, the problem of that being lost forever to developments? Should it be Federal; should it be State; should it be local? Which one of those three or what combination of those three?

Mr. **King**. That is a difficult question. I think all levels of government have to share the responsibility.

As a farmer, one who comes from the soil, I appreciate the local control; but, occasionally, we have to lay down—I guess I should rephrase that.

I appreciate local control, but at the same time I encourage adherence to some guidelines that they may have developed at a higher level, be it State or Federal.

We are trying to identify and we have identified prime land in New York. We are acting to preserve them.

We can certainly commit much greater financial resources to preserving those in the State but we are trying to get other levels of the government to keep hands off of the farmlands that are producing the best for our consumers in New York.

Senator **Jepsen**. Who identified those lands? Was it a State agency or county agency or Federal agency? You said you identified the prime lands.

Mr. **King**. I think SCS.

Senator **Jepsen**. That is Federal. Do you have State zoning laws or do you have local zoning laws or a combination of both?

Mr. **King**. Local zoning laws.

Senator **Jepsen**. OK. So, your answer as to who controls, who should set policies for this prime farmland, should Federal, State, or local, you are saying it has got to be a combination of them?

Mr. **King**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Chamberlain.

Mr. **Chamberlain**. I agree with Mr. King. I could put it in the concept of local first. Of course in your structure of New York State, county would be the next level. Then State would come, and then Federal.

I think it has got to be a combination of all; but to make it work, it has got to be local first.

If they do not want to go with it, it should go on to the next level of government.

Senator **Jepsen**. I think I heard both of you say that the Federal role in this should be one of education. That is probably the main role, education and creating this understanding and, hopefully, a sense of concern about the loss of prime farmland.

Maybe that is all the further they should go. Then if we are going to have any laws, you want those to come from the local level, or do you want it to come from the State level? Are the local folks participating from representatives?

Mr. **Chamberlain**. In the concept of getting accepted by farmers, you know how difficult that is, especially if it comes down to the Federal level.

I think the concept of getting it accepted starts at the local level first.

In terms of identifying prime farmland, there have been soil surveys and Soil Conservation Service surveys. They are pretty well identified; but I think in terms of endorsement in our structure, particularly New York State, the zoning and regulatory level is actually the village, town, county and so forth.

Senator **Jepsen**. First of all, not that it is necessary, but let the record show that I am probably one of the last ones of 535 people in Congress in Washington to do that. I am like Will Rogers.

The further I get from Washington, the more people get from the country.

Having said that, I come back and say that I hear what you are saying in this local basis; but I also heard in testimony that they have not been doing such a good job.

What do you do? Do we let it continue and let this prime farmland go down, or how do we get at it?

Mr. **Griffen**. I think that what each of the gentlemen have said is correct. I think there is a combination needed, and it is a combination of local zoning laws and directing laws which we have for the statewide policies.

As far as Federal and State initiative goes, I think it should be educational primarily, arousing the awareness of people that they are losing a tremendous resource and, probably, a very important resource for the United States and for the area that they are in.

I think it should then become a local initiative after they have become aware that they do have a problem and that there are solutions out there.

They should be local initiatives and local laws, and this can be done by a variety of intermixing formulas. However, you want to say it, there is one set, and we have discovered that in New York.

Probably the Long Island situation, where purchasing development rights in that situation is found, where you have urban pressure, there is a great acceptance by the people in these urban areas to have it remain farmland. They are willing to pay for it, also.

I think the farmers that pay for those breaks, so to speak, for development for many years have the rights to be paid for that loss when it goes over to an agriculture preservation scheme, if you will.

Senator **Jepsen**. You mean if we keep that land, then it becomes valuable to city elements moving out there next to that, and the land goes up from $2,000 an acre to $7,000 or $8,000 an acre for development, maybe homesites.

You say if they keep that, somebody should reward them for it?

Mr. **Griffen**. If it comes out of the development, I think so.

Senator **Jepsen**. Who should pay for that?

Mr. **Griffen**. I think the total population should pay for that.

Senator **Jepsen**. The whole United States?

Mr. **Griffen**. On the State level. I would not like to see a Federal project, no. I am going along with you and Will Rogers on that.

Senator **Leahy**. You are talking about something in the way of a tax policy, for example, taxing agriculture use?

Mr. **Griffen**. There have been bond issues in Long Island. The bond issues were passed by the voting people in that jurisdiction, and they voted that that is what they wanted to do, to buy the development rights to those properties.

They would have farmland, green belts, what have you. That is what these areas are, and the population in this area paid for it. In this case, it was a township.

Senator **Leahy**. Having bought it, then they cannot use that for development?

Mr. **Griffen**. That is correct.

Senator **Leahy**. It is not a case of somebody else selling it subsequently for development and having to pay some back taxes? It is cut out?

Mr. **Griffen**. That is right, in agriculture district law. they pay back taxes and get back for development.

But in this other case where the seller's development rights for the local jurisdiction, then they no longer can—the jurisdiction owns those development rights unless the voters go again to the polls and say, "That land cannot be developed."

Senator **Leahy**. So, as far as their plans for the area, they go knowing that that is sort of sacrosanct?

Mr. **Griffen**. That is right.

Senator **Jepsen**. I have a deed of land in that area. Does that mean that is on my deed?

Mr. **Griffen**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. If I sell that land, if I should do that, to someone who wants to farm it, they buy that with the caveat or stipulation, whatever you attorneys call it, on the deed, and that goes along with this transfer of land, that you have to farm it, and you cannot ever sell it for development? Is that legal?

Senator **Leahy**. Sure.

Mr. **Griffen**. That is correct, and it is legal. The best way to do it is when you buy it, you know that land does not have development rights to it.

Senator **Leahy**. It is legal in the same way you can put in a law and the same way you cannot put a factory next to a hospital; you cannot have a building above a certain height, whatever.

Senator **Jepsen**. Those are zoning laws. Is that the same thing?

Senator **Leahy**. It is the same legally—for instance, as far as New York Court of Appeals, Vermont Supreme Court, U.S. Supreme Court, they have always upheld those provided there is a reasonable basis.

It provides you follow certain steps, due process steps, in setting it up.

You cannot arbitrarily come in and change the nature of the land and take a valuable holding from someone; but provided there has been just compensation, there has been a valid reason for doing it, the courts have always upheld it.

Mr **GRIFFEN**. I think that is the prime consideration. There has been compensation for it.

Senator **JEPSEN**. One more time for the record, how would that be paid? You say it was a bond issue?

Mr. **GRIFFEN**. Referendum bond issue on Long Island. New Jersey has a program; Massachusetts has a program.

Senator **JEPSEN**. How far does this issue, this bond issue, go with the county?

Mr. **GRIFFEN**. The one area I am thinking of in particular was a township.

Senator **JEPSEN**. A township?

Mr. **GRIFFEN**. Yes.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Mr. Rice, I heard you say you were concerned that targeting was taken away from established funds. This has been repeated many times across the country. Targeting is a good idea; it should be done, but they do not want it to be done at the expense of established programs.

I think you evidenced some concern that that was going to happen. I heard that.

You also said you are in agreement with soil conservation plans being required for FmHA loans. Now, getting back to my favorite question, how about commodity support? Do you think we should have cross-compliance there?

Mr. **RICE**. The association's position on that is positive, yes.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Your association?

Mr. **RICE**. Right.

Senator **JEPSEN**. That is New York Soil Conservation Districts Association, Inc.?

Mr. **RICE**. Representing the 57 districts of New York State.

Senator **JEPSEN**. All right. It is interesting. Mr. Chamberlain, what do you think about requiring that we have soil and water conservation practices with Federal programs?

Mr. **CHAMBERLAIN**. Yes, I agree with Arleigh.

Mr. **KING**. I agree with Mr. Rice and Mr. Chamberlain. If we are going to accept some benefits, then we have certain responsibilities we must meet.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Mr. Griffen, do you feel the same way?

Mr. **GRIFFEN**. Yes, I do. In a sense you do not have to comply with other programs. You do not have to take money if you do not want to. If you do take it, then you comply with the cross-compliance. It still is not being forced.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Now, then going back quickly across the panel. Mr. Griffen, whose business are these soil conservation and water resource problems that we have in this country forgetting about the geography? Whose responsibility is it? Is it the farmers, the consumers, the farmers and the consumers?

Is it everybody's business, or is it the one who reaps the most direct benefits? Can you give me a one liner on that as to whose responsibility it is for payment on that?

Mr. **Griffen**. I think the soil and water of the land is the responsibility of the United States. It is a tremendous national resource.

Senator **Jepsen**. It is a national responsibility?

Mr. **Griffen**. It is a national responsibility.

Mr. **King**. I would agree with Mr. Griffen except that I believe that the user is primarily responsible, but it is a responsibility of the entire population.

Senator **Jepsen**. All right. Mr. Chamberlain?

Mr. **Chamberlain**. I believe it should be a combination of both the land user and the Government.

Mr. **Rice**. If I may take a little bit longer in that question, I think the financial responsibility should be extended to all levels of government and throughout society, including the landowner.

I think the organizational structure for soil conservation should be set up by the local districts. We must maintain the organizational structure where local people set priorities.

Local people work with local land, and that is the success of the future.

Senator **Leahy**. I have some questions here, but I think we have covered the highlights of them.

Senator **Jepsen**. All right. New York is completed.

We will now have the panel from Connecticut. I will leave it up to you as to how you want to do it. Do you want to take it from the young lady whose name I do not have on this list?

Would you introduce yourselves? Your written testimony will be entered on the record as if read in full.

STATEMENT OF MARY GOODHOUSE, ON BEHALF OF EARL WATERMAN, COMMISSIONER, CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mrs. **Goodhouse**. My name is Mary Goodhouse. I am a dairy farmer's daughter from Litchfield County, Conn., and am here today to represent, Commissioner Earl Waterman of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. I am also Mr. Waterman's designee to the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to comment on the national program for soil and water conservation.

I will go right to the heart of the issue. We have a critical resource problem: Connecticut agriculture is losing its natural resource base. We are losing our farmland. It is being converted to nonagricultural use, and no State has experienced a higher rate of loss than Connecticut. In 1982, 10,000 farmland acres were lost.

We have a substantial agricultural economy, with cash farm income exceeding $300 million. There are 4,300 farms in Connecticut which satisfy 50 percent of our need for dairy products and 100 percent of our need for eggs. Connecticut is ninth in the Nation in tobacco production. The number of small farms is increasing, and there is a resurgence of young people in agriculture.

Therefore, recognizing the importance of farming to the State, we in Connecticut have taken an aggressive role in arresting the decline of our natural resource base through legislation and personal commitment.

We have an act providing for special taxation, an act concerning the preservation of Connecticut's agricultural land, an act concerning succession and transfer taxes, and an act providing for the right to farm.

Yet, with all this legislation it takes a special commitment on the part of agricultural industries, agricultural leaders, and our State and Federal departments of agriculture.

This is our No.1 priority and we are disappointed and concerned that the national program for soil and water conservation does not include an aggressive program for supporting efforts to protect our best farmland from conversion to other purposes.

It seems ironic that we would place our greatest priority on a program to slow erosion that is gradually eroding our ability to produce food and not say anything about conversion of farmland which immediately terminates the value of that land for food production.

I hope that you will take action to see that this national program for soil and water conservation continues to emphasize the need for USDA support to this activity.

In dollar terms, the State of Connecticut has made a substantial contribution to preserving our farm resources. In 1978, a pilot program was established to preserve farmland through the purchase of development rights.

Since then $15 million have been appropriated to save farmland.

We feel that this contribution and this identification by the State of a critical need to retain farmland should be recognized as a part of a national program for soil and water conservation. It is the land. To produce food and fiber, we need the land.

Much of the success of our program to purchase the development rights on key farms in Connecticut is a result of USDA assistance. The national soil survey program has provided us the basis for evaluating the farms which are most desirable for protection. USDA expertise in assisting farmers to be more productive also contributes to this effort.

The soil and water conservation districts have been successful in working with communities throughout Connecticut to make them aware of the need to establish local policies to protect agricultural land. Without this assistance our program would be less effective, and I encourage you to continue to provide this support and elevate its importance to your national program.

We are not stressing this as a self-sufficiency issue in Connecticut because this is not practical or essential. But, as water supply issues become more critical in the West, soil erosion continues, United States and world populations expand, transportation costs rise, and demand for agricultural exports increases, our ability to produce food locally will become more important.

We have developed a food and agricultural policy for the State of Connecticut. In this policy we deal with the issues of nutrition, economics, marketing, farmland preservation and conservation, research and increased productivity, the profession of farming, transportation issues, processing and storage, farm credit, and supplies and repairs.

USDA is assisting us in all these areas and can assist us even further through programs that assist farmers with soil and water conservation, production, education, water quality protection, water quality management, and land-use planning; and further assist with research and development dealing with new crops, better markets and product handling and packaging.

I support the concept of strengthening the conservation partnership in the national program for soil and water conservation. A good example of this in action is our cooperative program to assist farmers with the installation of expensive waste management systems in Connecticut.

USDA technical assistance is provided through the Soil Conservation Service; financial assistance to the farmer is provided through the Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service; education assistance is provided by the Cooperative Extension Service; and, loans are available through the Farmers Home Administration.

In additional to this, the State of Connecticut has provided matching funds for critical waste management systems that are needed to protect water quality in Connecticut. This strengthened State and local partnership has enabled us to solve some critical resource problems and assist the agricultural industry with updated waste management systems.

The Connecticut Department of Argiculture is also looking at a program to involve the soil and water conservation districts in developing erosion control plans for State-owned farmland. This will be a part of our effort to increase the agricultural use of public lands in Connecticut.

I know also that USDA has developed a rural development strategy. It seems that there is a real opportunity for the soil and water conservation program through the resource conservation and development areas to assist in implementing a rural development program.

A rural development program in Connecticut must address primarily social aspects of agriculture and rural life. We have tremendously increased numbers of small farms that intersperse our landscape, create new challenges for agricultural leaders, and play a major role in food production and our economy.

I want to close by expressing the appreciation of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture for one of the spinoffs of this national RCA program. We are cosponsor of a special project in Connecticut to evaluate the impact of our State laws and local regulations that we may have on the books that prevents the use of our less desirable land for development.

This project, which is being carried out with a special grant through the Soil Conservation Service, is enabling us to look at some of the disincentives to developing on areas that would not affect our capability to produce food.

We look forward to the results of this program and are confident that they will be of benefit to USDA. The cooperation that has resulted from our carrying out this project in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service and the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation is very beneficial to our State.

Agriculture in Connecticut is essential to our economy. It is the core of our environment. We respectfully ask your consideration of our goals, especially that of slowing the loss of our prime farmland.

USDA can take an active role is assisting the States, and I am very much encouraged by your opening remarks and your interest in the whole issue. Thank you very much.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Mary. The next speaker will be Benjamin Warner.

STATEMENT OF BENJAMIN WARNER, ON BEHALF OF STANLEY PAC, COMMISSIONER, CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, HARTFORD, CONN.

Mr. **Warner**. I am Benjamin Warner, director, Water Resources Unit, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. I represent Stanley Pac, commissioner of the department of environmental protection. The department of environmental protection in Connecticut is responsible by State statute for the evaluation and correction of soil and water conservation problems in Connecticut and for establishing soil and water conservation districts to assist in carrying out this responsibility. The commissioner is also responsible for establishing the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation to assist in coordinating the soil and water conservation program in Connecticut.

I am pleased to be able to attend this hearing and comment on the new national RCA program. While USDA was preparing this national program, the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation was developing Connecticut's long range soil and water conservation program.

This program, which I am giving you a copy of, establishes Connecticut's policies and recommendations for action in dealing with seven major soil and water conservation topics.

These are: agricultural land, forest resources, soil resources, soil erosion and sedimentation, water supply and water quality, floodplain and storm water management, and education in conservation. We are proud of this program because it is working. It has helped us focus on result-oriented actions.

The program outlines 49 specific recommendations for action in these 7 topic areas, and significant progress has already been made on 31 of these recommendations.

The seven topics are all essential to an overall effective program for soil and water conservation in Connecticut. However, I will specifically address in my comments the national program's major topic and one of my department's major responsibilities, which is flood control programs.

I am pleased that the USDA program places emphasis on the need for a coordinated State and Federal program to reduce flood damage. Approximately 183,000 acres of Connecticut has been identified as prone to flooding from storm runoff from the 100-year flood.

There is a growing awareness that changing land use, urbanization, and encroachment on flood plains will increase the depth and extent of flooding to disastrous proportions. Solutions may require structural components in one municipality while benefits accrue in another community.

Nonstructured approaches may provide some benefits, but generally have limited potential and acceptability. Impacts on flood control measures on the environment generate mixed evaluation and reactions, often dividing communities on the relative merit and impact of alternative proposals.

The complex interrelationship between flood damages and their solutions, environmental impacts and changes, and politics makes it essential for State, Federal, and local coordination in planning, constructing, and maintaining projects to reduce or minimize flood damage.

In 1981, the State legislature amended Connecticut's Public Law 566 enabling legislation to address this complex interrelationship. Connecticut now has a comprehensive flood management program which includes the following components.

One, continued work with Federal agencies in identifying flood prone areas and establishing priorities for action programs.

Two, taking aggressive action to prevent further buildup in flood prone areas and wetlands.

Three, developing a statewide flood warning system.

Four, implementing our State flood protection program to install flood control measures on a cost-shared basis in cooperation with Federal programs.

Five, identifying, evaluating, protecting and improving water quality.

The Public Law 566 program of the Soil Conservation Service has been effectively used in Connecticut to assist us in carrying out our policies. Through the river basin planning portion of this program, we are now looking at overall flood problems in the central coastal river basin area.

Unfortunately, river basin funds are limited, and it appears that this program will not be available to assist us in evaluating overall flood problems in the remainder of the State. This is an important aspect of carrying out an effective statewide program and emphasis should be placed in the national program on the value of river basin planning on a statewide basis.

We also recommend that the national program place emphasis on the need for the Federal Government to aggressively support programs that prevent further urbanization in flood-prone areas. It makes little sense to spend tax dollars on flood prevention while permitting the continued construction in the floodplains.

We believe strongly that one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce flood damage on existing properties is to establish an effective statewide flood-warning system, so that individuals can be notified of a pending flood and have knowledge of how to prepare their property for the flood and what to do during the flood period.

I recommend that the concept of early warning be investigated as a feasible increment of the national soil and water conservation program. In the national program there appears to be a shift in priority from flood-prevention projects which have structural measures, such as dams and stream channel improvement, to land treatment measures which have the primary purpose of controlling erosion.

I oppose this shift because I believe that there is still a critical need to install structures to reduce flood depths and improve stream channels for the conveyance of water. Our experience in Connecticut with Public Law 566 watershed protection programs has shown them to be environmentally sound and practical solutions. The Reader's Digest is to the contrary.

On June 5, 1982, and June 6, 1982, Connecticut was devastated by rainfall ranging from 10 to 15 inches and flood conditions which were the worst ever in many parts of Connecticut. Before the President had declared Connecticut a Federal disaster area, the Soil Conservation Service was carrying out an emergency watershed protection program under the authority of Public Law 566 which enabled Connecticut to rapidly recover from the devastation of some of our stream channels.

Within 3 days of the flood, the Soil Conservation Service had awarded contracts and had contractors on the job in many areas. More than $2.5 million was provided through this program to stabilize critically eroded areas, remove debris from streambanks and stabilize channels from further erosion as a result of the flood.

We in the Department of Environmental Protection want to commend the Soil Conservation Service staff for their excellent leadership in carrying out this restoration program. I emphasize this here only to point out that the national program for soil and water conservation needs to continue to include a variety of special activities which cannot be dealt with by the States, such as the emergency watershed protection programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I'll be glad to answer any questions about Connecticut's soil and water conservation program as related to the Department of Environmental Protection.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Mr. Warner. I assume you are W. Kent Olson, executive director of the Nature Conservancy.

STATEMENT OF W. KENT OLSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Mr. OLSON. My name is Ken Olson, executive director of the Nature Conservancy of Connecticut. The conservancy is a private, nonprofit organization of 160,000 members, nearly 6,000 of whom reside in Connecticut.

Our mission is to preserve ecologically significant land, land that harbors rare and endagered species, supports unusual communities of plants and animals, or is in and of itself an unusual ecosystem.

So far we have permanently protected 2 million acres, including 14,000 in Connecticut, the largest private preserve system in the world, a system dedicated entirely to public purposes.

Unlike many of its sister nonprofits, the conservancy is not primarily a lobby organization, not an adversary or an advocate. We avoid litigation except to protect properties we already own.

Since our inception in the 1950's we have worked almost entirely within the free enterprise system. We acquire rights in property by negotiating for gifts of land, by setting up bargain sales, and, when we have to, by paying full market value.

The public doesn't know us very well because we generally work behind the scenes. It is only when we announce an acquisition that citizens become aware that the conservancy has saved an area.

Our quiet business-like approach has prompted Smithsonian to call us, "the conservationists in three-piece suits." Reader's Digest says we are "happy land grabbers." The nickname I like best is the nature conspiracy.

I'm here today to speak specifically about the RC&D program of the Soil Conservation Service. The primary contact we have had with the national program for soil and water conservation has been through the resource conservation and development program administered by SCS in Connecticut.

We worked closely with SCS and the eastern Connecticut resource conservation and development council, as well as the Middlesex district council, in carrying out one of the most significant conservation accomplishments in Connecticut. It was a combined effort to protect, develop, and manage Chapman's Pond on the lower Connecticut River.

Chapman's is a tidally regulated fresh water body. It harbors 250 species of wildlife, including 27 avian variety. It is an overwintering location for northern pike and at least two rare flora of Connecticut call it home and one bald eagle.

The land was to be developed. The owners wanted to log the hillsides above the pond and then to put in place a 64-unit subdivision.

The Soil Conservation Service estimated that should this occur, several thousand tons of sediment would likely issue into the pond, influencing negatively its vital functions as an important biological resource in the lower Connecticut River, which is, as you are aware, the second largest river on the east coast draining some 11,000 square miles. It is the largest major river in America that does not have a city at its mouth.

Working with the Soil Conservation Service through the RC&D program, the conservancy in a broad alliance with other groups and agencies was able to dedicate Chapman's Pond as a public waterbase fish and wildlife development, the Cynthia B. Carlson Preserve.

Please, bear in mind that what the RC&D program and the conservancy were able to accomplish was what many others had tried to do for nearly a decade, including Senator Abraham Ribbicoff of Connecticut.

There were at least two salient contributions that RC&D made. Perhaps the most important was the technical and scientific assistance it gave to the Nature Conservancy to help identify the areas around the pond that should be acquired to protect the unique resources.

The Soil Conservation Service provided a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to looking at the whole resource, evaluating the alternatives, and making recommendations for our consideration in purchase and development.

Second, the RC&D program contributed $205,000 to the project measure. That amounts to less than one third of the $700,000 figure for acquisition and permanent management of the area. The timing was critical. Had the RC&D program not acted so decisively, I question whether Chapman's Pond could have been saved.

Another way of looking at this unique alliance between the private nonprofit sector and one of the Government's best professional agencies, the Soil Conservation Service, is that the private nonprofit sector assisted the Government in an important acquisition.

The private nonprofit sector contributed $495,000—the rest of the $700,000—toward helping the Soil Conservation Service reach its goals. In these austere times, when everyone asks Government to be frugal, I think the leverage obtained at Chapman's Pond by the RC&D program is a model of economic efficiency.

As I look at the final program for soil and water conservation and the 1981 farm bill, it appears that the Department of Agriculture's assistance in recreation and fish and wildlife activities will be nearly terminated.

The land rights program under which Chapman's was preserved in perpetuity has disappeared. This is unfortunate. The Nature Conservancy would urge your committee to broaden the national priorities so that areas like Connecticut and New England, where land use issues are more complex than in many other parts of the country, can gain access to programs which incorporate agriculture, recreation, fish and wildlife, the control of erosion, flooding and other issues, gathering them into an overall agenda which is now available through RC&D.

Incidentally, this is a little bit off my area of expertise, but targeting things seems to be the equivalent of dense pack in a way.

The Nature Conservancy has worked closely with David Wordell, president of the New England Association of RC&D areas, in coordinating the work at Chapman's Pond and in trying to assist his organization with their overall objectives in New England.

As one who has only recently seen RC&D at work, I am impressed by the uniqueness of the individual activities of each RC&D area.

In the New England States, the RC&D areas have helped upgrade the quality of rural life by providing funds for work that protects land from erosion, reduces flooding and sediment damage, and protects reservoirs from siltation and other pollution, provides safe and adequate water-based recreation, improves the habitat of particular areas for fish and wildlife, and provides drainage benefits.

All of which is to say, that in a small State like Connecticut those important issues are indivisible. They are interrelated. Land use is hitched to erosion control, is hitched to flood control, is hitched to the prevention of pollution, is hitched to the enhancement of natural habitat, and so on.

A real but somewhat pedestrian example of this interconnectedness is that by protecting from development the wetlands at Chapman's Pond, the RC&D program helped protect downstream reparians from the kind of flood damage that is caused from overdevelopment of our river valleys.

It is with pleasure that the Nature Conservancy continues to endorse and support the RC&D progam. RC&D presents a genuine opportunity to coordinate and put into effect plans for protecting natural resources while at the same time providing for their wise use.

That is true utilitarian conservation as was envisioned by Gifford Pinchot, a former resident of Connecticut, founder of the U.S. Forest Service, another agency you oversee. Pinchot believed in decentralization, trusting his field men to make their decisions pertinent to local needs.

It is significant that many RC&D actions, combined efforts of SCS officials and local volunteers, are initiated by the local residents who are best able to recognize the needs of their area. Pinchot's idea of decentralized decisionmaking is manifest in the way RC&D works in New England.

Although, the national program urges State and local contributions as a means to accelerate the two national priorities of erosion control and flood protection, it leaves out the importance of local evaluations and natural resource issues and the establishment of local priorities.

The Nature Conservancy is concerned that such emphasis will diminish the technical assistance that should be available on other major issues.

In Essex, Conn., within 3 days of the flood, contractors were on the job. That was a huge flood. It took lives and wasted some property and national land.

It is significant that these two activities, preserving Chapman's Pond and affirmatively restoring an area downstream which had been devastated occurred simultaneously by the work of the Soil Conservation Service in Middlesex County, where I live in Connecticut. We think this is a remarkable example of the kind of expertise and leadership of which we all can be proud.

I urge your committee to support a national program which continues to provide for this diversity and allows the highest level of funding. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF NORMA O'LEARY, PRESIDENT, CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, THOMPSON, CONN.

Ms. O'Leary. My name is Norma O'Leary. I am chairman of the Windham County Soil and Water Conservation District, president of the Connecticut Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, president of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, and a member of the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation. My husband and I operate a dairy farm in Thompson, Conn., although lately he has been wondering if I am going to do my share.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express some of my views and the views of the organizations I represent. We have an important agricultural industry in New England, and we feel that the national soil and water conservation program can help us maintain and improve this essential industry.

As a result of the Resource Conservation Act, we have gathered data to evaluate our soil and water resource conditions, increased public awareness, and set some national priorities. I do not feel, however, that this process has created a program that is result oriented. The selected program will only slow this resource degradation.

I urge your committee and Congress to face head on the immediate need to reverse this trend of degradation. We cannot afford to do less, and I believe the public is willing to make that commitment to protect our food producing capability. It is important to our national defense, our national social well-being, and our economy.

I also want to urge this committee to redirect this national program to provide for more flexibility from region to region in the country. In Connecticut, we have 3 million residents on 3 million acres of land. Our best farmlands are scattered throughout the State and are diminishing rapidly as a result of urbanization and competition for uses.

We produce 100 percent of our eggs, 50 percent of our milk, and lesser percentages of a variety of fruits, vegetables, and meat products. More than 60 percent of our State is forested. Farming in Connecticut is a real challenge.

Most farmers have nonfarm neighbors; work with very complex soil conditions, which challenge their management ability; are faced with high taxes due to the pressure of competitive use; and have limited and sometimes distant sources of machinery and supplies.

On the other hand, we are close to markets and consumers; have ample rainfall for most crops; and have a local public that understands the value of agriculture to Connecticut's economy and quality of life.

The national priority problems of erosion and flooding are major concerns of Connecticut's farmers, but there are other important issues that concern farmers in Connecticut. Planning erosion control, water management, and waste management systems requires a thorough knowledge of State and local laws.

Conservation technicians have the specialized knowledge to evaluate the effects of these plans on adjacent land uses, water quality, flooding, economics, and wildlife.

Conservation districts in Connecticut, over the years, have contributed significantly toward providing funds and staff to complement USDA in dealing with these soil and water issues.

In Connecticut, we expect to increase our funding and increase our assistance, but it is essential that we have a professional USDA staff that has the expertise in resource management. These professionals assist us in providing agricultural land use planning in Connecticut.

We, in the soil and water conservation district, will work harder and we will contribute more, but we need now, more than ever, a well-trained staff of soil conservationists from USDA to train us, encourage us, and assist us in dealing with these complex soil, water and related issues.

Targeting I think we have covered. I agree with I believe it was Arleigh Rice of New York. I won't go into detail on that.

There appear to be some contradictions between this national program and current budget proposals for 1984. One of the greatest values of this RCA process has been the inventorying of our resource base which has enabled us to make some good decisions.

Yet, we do not have enough data to know exactly where our most critical problems are and how we should deal with them. We need to continually inventory and update our resources data, so that we can accordingly adjust to changing conditions. The 1984 budget reduces funds for these inventories.

Another activity which seemed to have received little emphasis, in either the budget or the national program, is the soil survey, its maintenance, and utilization. In Connecticut, we are fortunate to have the soil survey completed. We have embarked on a major program of updating the soil survey so that it can be used with the current technology of computers.

It will take significant funding to do this and a major effort to convince land-use decisionmakers to utilize the soil survey. This program should receive additional emphasis on funding. It is our soil resource base that we must understand if we are to make good decisions about the soil usage, maintenance, and protection.

The State of Connecticut has an aggressive program to help the agricultural industry through the purchase of development rights. USDA is assisting in this effort with soil information, public education, and farmer assistance. The need for USDA to assist in protecting the best farmlands from conversion to other uses is a critical need which is conspicuously absent from the national program

There should be a national policy to assist States in protecting our best farmland and it should be a part of the national program for soil and water conservation. Nearly 900 people in Connecticut responded to the draft national program last year, and the most prevalent comment was that agricultural land preservation should be the No. 1 priority.

In Connecticut, as in most of New England, there is a large urban population concentrated on a small land base. We have some excellent agriculture land and a valuable agricultural industry. We have important forest land, water, and other natural resources.

The problem is to coordinate our conflicting land uses and protect the resource base. We must maintain a viable agriculture, satisfy the needs of a large urban population and protect our resources for future use and enjoyment.

These complex issues need to be addressed now. We need all the professional expertise available from USDA to complement the efforts of the States and all local conservation districts.

I also would like to agree with Bill Chamberlain's testimony on urban conservation. It is needed and used in Connecticut. Thank you for listening.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you. Now, Norma, we will stay right with you. You said that Connecticut has an active program in purchasing land development rights. Would you or someone else on the panel, as briefly as possible, just describe that program?

Ms. O'LEARY. I will turn it over to Mary Goodhouse who is very active in the program.

Ms. GOODHOUSE. This program was one of the first in the country, and it is a classic example of cooperation on many, many levels involving many State, Federal, and local people.

That is mostly because the people in Connecticut and the legislature are very conservative. So far we have advanced $5 million for this, which is quite a sum for us.

But we are operating it. All that money goes to the purchase of development rights. None goes for staff.

Basically, I am coordinating the help we get from SCS and from ASCS and from the conservation districts. It is a voluntary program.

We solicit applications from farmland owners. We evaluate the land with SCS for its soil quality and for its productivity and for its history.

We will try to keep ongoing family farms in operation, and we are also very concerned about the Connecticut River Valley land, which is the richest and most productive in Connecticut.

After receiving an application, the land is evaluated and the land is appraised. We offer the landowners the value of their development rights.

We are trying to assess what the agricultural value is, and all of the land in Connecticut is under developmental pressure.

It is quite an expensive program, but we have been able to preserve 5,000 acres and spend $8.5 million of that so far.

The other main criteria is that the land has to be in jeopardy for nonagricultural purposes. That is the way the land is chosen, good land under development pressure.

We have been soliciting advice from each town from their conservation commissions. We are encouraging them to develop open space programs whereby they rank the farmland in their community.

Connecticut is a small State. There is a direct link between the State and most of the towns. On the regional basis, we have regional planning agencies and soil conservation districts and SCS on the county level.

These people and these fieldworkers know the land; they know the farms. We are in a constant exchange of information with them.

It is a program that we feel is going to pick up speed as long as we can keep getting the assistance from the people of the State or Connecticut.

What we look to the Federal Government for is the continued support of SCS, ASCS and a recognition of the contribution we have made in dollars in the State of Connecticut, any maybe some further support for that.

Senator **Jepsen**. In your testimony you said that small farms are increasing and young people are moving in. Why is that?

In most places in the country—at least this is the feedback that I get—the farms are getting larger and fewer. You are saying they are getting smaller and there are more of them here.

Ms. **Goodhouse**. They are getting smaller and more diversified in Connecticut. People are producing eggs and apples and geraniums and ornamental shrubs and selling sweet corn and strawberries.

There is a lot of land that is going into vegetable production. There is vocational agriculture. More kids are interested in it now.

I don't know that it is a more practical approach to getting in touch with their environment again. It may be a turn away from—everyone went to college in Connecticut 15 years ago. Now, the kids are more interested in working with the land.

There was an article in the New York Times on Tuesday where our local dairy agent in Litchfield County said he had a list of 100 youngsters who were looking for farm positions.

Senator **Jepsen**. In one or two lines, why do you think this is? Why is it?

Ms. **O'Leary**. I think you know if you can make money at whatever you produce, you are going to make it and be there to make it. We have the market; we have the people who are willing to buy.

If they can make money, they are going to stay in agriculture. If they cannot make money, they are going to something else.

Senator Jepsen. The young people are coming back to the soil because they can finally make money?

Ms. O'Leary. They can make money. Part of it is the money. A part of it is a lot of people want to come back to the land where things begin.

Senator Jepsen. Well, I am interested in pursuing that as to why you think this is happening. It is interesting.

In the interest of time, we will have to move on. I hope I can hear from you with regard to that. I am very interested in why the young people are saying, "We want to work with the soil," and why small farms are increasing in numbers in Connecticut.

Very quickly, again, the question: In your opinion should the Federal commodities support programs, FHA, any programs of Federal taxpayer dollars involved and given to recipients of those programs being required to integrate soil and water conservation programs where needed?

Ms. O'Leary. Yes, I believe in cross compliance.

Mr. Olson. I would say, yes, also.

Mr. Warner. Yes, I would agree with cross compliance.

Ms. Goodhouse. I am going to be the 1 in 10. I think that it can work on a voluntary basis in a State like Connecticut, but I may be coming around to the other position in another 5 years.

Senator Jepsen. You are 5 years away from saying, yes, it must be complied with. All right.

I am very impressed with the testimony and the Nature Conservancy. I like your style and your attitude. That is what it is all about in this country.

You can take a lot of things. It does not take tax dollars to do it. With regard to what anybody may call you, your goals are admirable; and your goals and results have shown what really can be done when people of good faith just get together and simply do it rather than look toward Washington.

Mr. Olson. Thank you for those remarks, Senator.

Senator Leahy. I am also intrigued by the return to the land there and the few articles on the studies that were done in Connecticut. If you get a moment to just drop me a line and make a mention of this hearing and the articles you think I might be interested in, I would like to see that. Vermonters might be surprised to see that, too. I would like to find out if there are common factors involved.

Senator Jepsen. Mary Goodhouse, Mr. Warner, Mr. Olson, Norma O'Leary, as we say in the jargon of the Senate, thank you for taking time out of your very busy schedule to be with us today. I appreciate it. Your testimony was super.

Senator Leahy. As a Vermonter, thank you for coming to Vermont. I went to Connecticut last night. Thank you for coming.

Ms. Goodhouse. I want to say, Senator, that I did include some more information on our program of farm waste management and our food and agriculture policy.

Senator Jepsen. Thank you. I will now advise you that we will recess until 1:45 at which time we will reconvene. At that time we will take up the panel from Rhode Island.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Senator **Jepsen**. We are now ready for the Rhode Island panel.

Mr. **Morin**. Mr. Duncan is not here today. Being the soil conservation representative, he felt it would be inappropriate for him to be making comments on the program. Instead, it is the chief of the Rhode Island Office of State Planning, Daniel Varin, V-a-r-i-n.

Senator **Jepsen**. So, the Rhode Island panel will be Dr. Robert C. Wakefield, Stephen Morin, Matthew Puchalski, and Daniel Varin. Are you decided among yourselves how you are going to proceed?

Mr. **Morin**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, it looks like you have probably come from as far away as anybody here; is that right?

Mr. **Morin**. Maine could have come further, possibly.

Senator **Jepsen**. Welcome. Thank you for coming. I look forward to hearing your testimony. All of your written testimony will be entered into the record as if read, and you may proceed in any way you so desire. You are Stephen Morin, administrative officer of Rhode Island State Conservation Committee?

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN G. MORIN, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, RHODE ISLAND STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Mr. **Morin**. Yes. My name is Stephen G. Morin, assistant to the director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and administrative officer of the Rhode Island State Conservation Committee.

I would like to thank the New England congressional delegation for their help in arranging this hearing and Senator Jepsen for extending his hearing schedule to include our region.

Our remarks will be brief and in the form of a single report from which we will each summarize portions. The reason we have chosen to present a unified report is that we agree in all aspects that the national program for soil and water conservation is inadequate for the needs of Rhode Island and the Northeast.

We believe that the national program has failed to accomplish the purpose of the Resources Conservation Act. We believe the intent of Congress for the act was clear and farsighted. Its main thrust was to assess the condition of the food-producing resources of the Nation and to devise a national program to insure our ability to feed ourselves and others in the future.

The assessment found that our resources were threatened, that productivity was being jeopardized because of poor management of soil and water resources, unchecked conversion of prime farmland, and overuse of unsuitable land brought about by increased national and world demand for food.

It made certain conservative assumptions about the patterns of demand and the ability of technology to keep advancing the productivity of our farms.

Yet, even with those conservative assumptions, the assessment found that, unless a significant increase was made in the level of conservation activity, we would irreparably lose productivity. It found that three times the present conservation base was necessary to protect the resources through the next half century.

This national program, while accepting those conclusions, proposed, at best, level funding and, at worst, reducing its commitment to protect the resource base.

The national program should have been a plan to carry out the objective of protecting our Nation's long-term productivity; it should have been the mainstay of a national agricultural policy. It is, instead, a budget-management document. This, in itself, is disappointing, but its implications for our region and our State are serious.

The central premise of this program is a redirection of the Federal conservation programs to be accomplished by a 25-percent reduction in the present conservation program. The money thus made available would be targeted to prevent soil erosion and encourage water conservation in areas highly prone to those problems.

According to the information we have, no area in our region, except for parts of Aroostook County, Maine, will be eligible for targeted funds. This means that the conservation programs now at work will be seriously undercut, and those funds that remain will be used to support the national objectives.

Even this base level is dependent on a finding by USDA that, "resource conditions are adequate to maintain sustained productivity," and USDA goes on to say that, "bases will vary from State to State and area to area."

This points to a program that will in all likelihood profoundly and adversely affect our region's participation in the national agricultural economy. The program not only plans to drain away a significant share of our conservation programs, but it ignores regional priorities in conducting the base-level program.

An example of such an overlooked priority is the lack of attention to farmland preservation, a regional concern and one of particular interest to Rhode Island.

The program speaks of strengthening the partnership between Federal, State, and local efforts to resolve conservation problems. This translates to mean that State and local spending should reflect the national goal of sustaining productivity.

Yet, in the area of farmland preservation, where many States in the region have committed significant new resources, the Federal partnership will be a silent one.

In the past, we have received invaluable aid from USDA in identifying the problem and implementing the solution.

It is interesting to note that the Soil Conservation Service projected that four States would lose all of their farmland by the end of the century without corrective measures. Two of those States were in this region; one was Rhode Island. Farmland preservation is not a national priority and will not be eligible for assistance in the future.

It is difficult for us to believe that the loss of some productivity due to soil erosion is a more critical problem than the loss of all productivity due to farmland conversion. From our perspective, protecting an acre of farmland prevents the loss of thousands of tons of soil.

We feel that it makes sense to preserve the productivity of the land that lies in the midst of the largest population concentration in the Nation. The people in our State agree.

Despite the fact that over half of our population lives in urban areas and the majority of the rest live in suburban areas, over two-thirds voted to support the State's farmland preservation bond.

We feel that farmland protection will make more sense if the national program fails to sustain national levels of productivity, as it must if the funding levels recommended by the assessment remain unmet.

It seems clear to us that the national program fails to sustain the productivity of our part of the Nation when measured against this one regional priority area. We also have concerns about the program's impact on the special working relationships we have developed with the USDA agencies over the last half century to address other priority areas.

The rest of our delegates will discuss the effect of the national program on that relationship from the perspective of local conservation districts, community concerns, and the RD&D program. They are: Dr. Robert Wakefield, Dan Varin, and Matthew Puchalski. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT C. WAKEFIELD, PRESIDENT, RHODE ISLAND ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. **Wakefield.** My name is Robert C. Wakefield. I am president of the Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts and professor of agronomy, in the department of plant and soil sciences at the University of Rhode Island.

I would like to bring to your attention something of special concern to Rhode Island and that is targeting, which we feel has a severe impact on the State of Rhode Island, as Mr. Morin just stated. We would like to express our concern with current plans to mobilize funds for the targeting program, funds that presently exist in the budgets.

Funds are already inadequate for work that needs to be done: Solving local problems concerned with preservation of agricultural land, soil and water conservation, and community assistance programs to reduce runoff, flooding, and to maintain water quality. This is where the funds will have to be picked up from.

The Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts, and the National Association of Conservation Districts support, however, the concept of targeting which can be applied to lands and land users who have the most serious problems and who can be helped most effectively by the range of programs and funds available.

However, we believe that proper consideration has not been given to the nature of soils in Rhode Island and other northeastern soils. These soils are rather thin and fragile, and they differ from the soils of other sections of the country that are well-endowed with deep productive loams. We feel that a serious threat is posed to those soils of ours.

Soil loss estimates developed by the national resources inventory of 1977 consider that 5 tons per acre per year is a tolerable loss. This may be true in other regions where deep soils developed under far different ecological condition. I doubt that in some parts of the country that the loss of 5 tons would result in an impact that would be noticeable.

Soils in Rhode Island and other Northestern States, however, are relatively shallow. The land is rolling and, therefore, much more subject to erosion. This is not only an agricultural problem but has a severe impact in urban areas, where sedimentation, flooding, and water quality are critically important.

In summary, we recommend that, one, targeting schedules be delayed until adequate funding can be made available to maintain basic soil and water conservation programs in the districts at the present time; and, two, we would like to see the criteria for determining targeted areas be revised in order to properly address regional soil erosion conditions by taking into account the fragility of soils of the New England and northeastern area and the impact of losses on crop productivity, runoff, sedimentation, and water quality. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Mr. Varin.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL W. VARIN, CHIEF, RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM

Mr. VARIN. My name is Daniel W. Varin. I am chief of the Rhode Island statewide planning program. I was project director for the national land use task force of the council of State governments. In that capacity I had an opportunity to work with Mr. Andrew Varley, who was a State legislator in Iowa at that time. I certainly enjoyed the opportunity to get his perspective on land and water resource problems, which I found were not greatly different than those that I find in my home State.

I also served as chairman of the Governor's Task Force on Agricultural Land Preservation in 1980 and 1981. I am presently a member of the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission.

The subject of my testimony is that of community concerns. Two activities provide illustrations of how soil conservation programs respond effectively to those community concerns. These two have been selected because they provide very straightforward examples of how the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 was intended to work.

The first one refers to the adequate and proper management of soil and water resources. Rhode Island is experiencing very modest population growth but very dramatic change.

During the 1970 and 1980 decade, the State's older central cities, and the adjoining suburban communities that had seen rapid population growth throughout the first quarter century following World War II, had an essentially stable population or saw a decline during this period.

But the southern and western rural towns and the coastal region have become the major growth areas of the State. Twelve towns in these regions had a population increase of 25 percent or more for the past decade. No towns in other regions had growth rates even approaching these.

This pattern of movement beyond the established suburbs, and even beyond what we think of as the urban fringe, into previously rural communities characterized by small, scattered populations, agriculture, and open space puts tremendous pressure on their soil and water resources.

The local governments in these communities are not well equipped to cope with change of this rate and magnitude. Among the consequences easily identified in Rhode Island are widely scattered development, urbanization of many areas not suitable for intensive use, conversion of farmland, destruction of wetlands, degradation of water quality and contamination of drinking water sources.

Many of these communities are attempting to respond to this situation by adopting growth policies and reorienting their zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and other instruments for carrying out such policies, so as to recognize the natural characteristics of soil and water resources.

They are attempting to base land use decisions on the capabilities and limitations of soil types, topographic conditions, impact on availability and quality of water, and similar factors that previously did not enter into these considerations.

This approach is rapidly gaining momentum in Rhode Island, but it is workable only if valid information about those natural resources is available and if this information can be brought to bear on specific questions.

The Soil Conservation Service and its programs play a major role in this situation. The statewide soil survey completed in 1981 provides basic data on soil types and their properties and locates these with sufficient accuracy for many planning purposes.

Technical assistance by Soil Conservation Service staff is usually needed by local officials, developers, landowners, and others, however, in interpreting these data. That kind of technical assistance includes translating properties of soils into land use allocations or development standards or of deciding whether a given proposal should be undertaken in a particular way, if at all.

The current work of the Agricultural Land Preservation Commission demonstrates how this occurs at several different levels. This commission was created to identify valuable agricultural lands and purchase the development rights to these lands and has been funded to undertake those purchases.

The act that establishes the commission requires that it make an inventory of farmland a very basic tool in carrying out our work. We met this requirement by adopting the "Important Farmlands" maps prepared by the Soil Conservation Service in 1979 and 1980.

Next, we needed criteria for evaluation of proposals and selection of areas for the purchase of development rights. Soil suitability is the overriding factor in this evaluation process. SCS prepared a method for evaluation of soil suitability and a classification of soils according to their relative agricultural value. That system has been formally adopted by the commission as an administrative rule.

In the next few months, we will receive and act on many proposals and we will, again, turn to SRS as a critical source of guidance in making each decision on the purchase of development rights.

The second basic problem is flooding. Flooding is a widespread and serious problem in Rhode Island which affects every one of the

39 cities and towns. It is a major problem. I give some dimensions of it in my written statement.

It will show that it is a serious and widespread problem, one in which our office is making a concentrated effort. That effort is to improve management of floodplains and reduce risks to life and losses of property. A major component of this effort is the joint agreement between our office and the Soil Conservation Service.

Under the agreement, SCS has completed detailed studies of two streams, and studies of four others are in progress. These studies evaluate flood conditions, identify the areas of risk, and make practical recommendations for actions to reduce hazards to existing development and prevent unwise future use.

All studies are done in cooperation with the communities concerned, the people who live in the areas, as well as the soil conservation districts, so that the proposals made are both fully understood and more likely to be implemented. This has proven to be the case for the first study completed, where major work has already been undertaken by the town involved.

The targeting system as proposed and combined with funding levels available will seriously affect our ability to continue these kinds of activities. I believe that a better direction in this area is found in a policy statement published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in February of 1983.

One of the policies enunciated in the statement under the title of, "Better Country, a Strategy for Rural Development in the 1980's," is as follows: "To streamline the Federal Establishment, to make it more responsive to local and State priorities, rather than the other way around."

I believe implementation of that policy will go a long way toward assisting to carry out the efforts that I and the others have described. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Mr. Puchalski.

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW A. PUCHALSKI, MEMBER, RHODE ISLAND RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Mr. PUCHALSKI. My name is Matthew Alexander Puchalski. I am with the resource conservation and development from Rhode Island as a council member. I am a member of the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District; past president of the Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts; past chairman of the Charlestown Planning Board, a coastal town in Rhode Island; and a private soil consultant.

I am very pleased to present testimony before such conservation and natural resource oriented leaders as yourselves, Senators.

The national program for soil and water conservation has established, basically, three priorities: Reduction of soil erosion on agricultural lands, conservation of water for agricultural uses, and the reduction of flood damages in upstream areas.

As you know, the RC&D program can meet these priorities if the local people feel the need is a high priority. However, this may not be the case in all RC&D areas.

In New England, erosion control on nonagricultural land is vitally important. In Rhode Island, the biggest little State in the Union, we completed a dune stabilization project at Fogland Marsh on Narragansett Bay last May. We are planning another dune stabilization measure, Gooseberry Beach, in Newport this year if RC&D funding is available.

We are concerned about water conservation. Our RC&D council has held landowner irrigation workshops to show the need for and how to plan for the conservation of water for agricultural uses. Water conservation in the humid Northeast may seem silly, but unfortunately, we often get too much water or too little water at a given time.

We are also concerned with urban flooding, but upstream flooding is not a critical problem in Rhode Island. We are taking a presently flexible program and adjusting it to fit local needs and priorities. I feel this program was established by Congress to meet the local needs of rural America.

In my opinion, the great strength of the RC&D program is the local leadership and grassroots volunteers who make up the governing councils. It is this organization which is ideally suited to involve local and State groups, organizations, and agencies to determine needs, resources, and opportunities for local decision and priority setting.

Each RC&D area has different local needs and resources available to them, so priorities will differ among RC&D areas. Under the national program for soil and water conservation, priorities will be dictated to the local RC&D council.

In Rhode Island, as well as the Northeast, many communities depend on recreation and the tourist industry for their economic base. These communities need the RC&D program for financial and technical assistance in developing recreational areas.

In my community of Charlestown, we are awaiting RC&D funding for Ninigret Park.

Ninigret is a water-based recreation development for swimming, fishing, ice skating, picnicking, and open space areas. The 172-acre area is adjacent to a 370-acre national wildlife refuge.

Charlestown has been working with the RC&D council for the past 1½ years. We have obtained the local land rights and have approved our share of the estimated costs. We have been awaiting funding but have been told that recreation is presently a low priority.

Under the national program for soil and water conservation, RC&D recreation facilities, as well as other presently eligible projects, will not receive financial assistance if they are not one of the three priorities.

To me, this appears contradictory to the aministration's policy of more State and local input, decisionmaking, and priority setting.

In his "State of the Union Address" in January of 1982, the President said:

> Our citizens feel they have lost control of even the most basic decision made about the essential services of Government, such as schools, welfare, roads, and even garbage collection. And they are right. The goal:

The President said:

Is a realignment that ends cumbersome administration and spiraling costs at the Federal level, while we insure these programs will be more responsive to both the people they are meant to help and the people who pay for them.

I interpret this to mean more local involvement and decisionmaking, not less. Right now it appears to me that the national program for soil and water conservation consists or more local input in dollars and less say in Federal assistance to local groups such as RC&D

In summary, the RC&D program was envisioned and designed to be action oriented with decisions and priorities determined by local people knowledgeable of resource needs and potential. We do have some of these kinds of people in Rhode Island and the Nation. It should not be constrained by decisionmakers unfamiliar with local needs and resources.

Gentlemen, it has been a pleasure for me to present this testimony to you. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Mr. Puchalski.

Mr. **Morin**. As a conclusion to these remarks, we feel that the Resources Conservation Act provided us with the opportunity to devise and carry out a long-term program for the protection of the entire Nation's soil and water resources. The assessment documented the need for that protection; the national program does not meet that need.

Congress recognized the problem in 1977; it should demand compliance in 1983. We urge you to send this program back to the Secretary of Agriculture. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. I hear the Northeast is saying—and, of course, it really has been emphasized here in Doctor Wakefield's testimony—the concern about the criteria and factors used to select areas for targeting, that you feel it should be reviewed and with some expanded parameters to be sure to include and recognize the fact that whatever soil you have—and it is not much; you do not have much left—that some consideration be given to that. Am I understanding what you are saying?

Dr. **Wakefield**. Yes; that is correct, Senator. Our soils were formed under a different sort of ecosystem than in other parts of the country. Ours was a forest ecosystem, and, as such, the soil development has not been as full as it was in Iowa, for example, where soil is developed under grasslands and is quite deep and fertile.

Senator **Jepsen**. Plus the fact that we have been farming it for 150 years less than you have.

Dr. **Wakefield**. That is correct, and your topography is a little different, too.

Senator **Jepsen**. But I want to make sure for the record that I get it very clearly. You do not feel at this time that the targeting procedures recognize your geographical unique situation.

Dr. **Wakefield**. Yes; that is correct. Studies are underway showing how crop productivity would be affected by small losses of topsoil.

It is amazing how so many of our soil types would decline very quickly in 25 or 30 or 40 years with small losses of topsoil.

Senator **Jepsen**. Just out of curiosity, Doctor, what is your doctor's degree in?

Dr. **Wakefield**. Agronomy at Rutgers University.

Senator **Jepsen**. What role would soil tilth research and accessibility by way of that type of facility play in determining what needs to be done with your soil?

Dr. **Wakefield**. Well, soils have various uses. You will find that most of the soils that are of value are already in production in the Northeast.

The forests have been cut; and, you know, the farmers have by trial and error determined which soils will produce an economic return. There are some soils still in forests, but mostly the good soils are already in use.

So, we have to use them very, very carefully. Does that answer your question?

Senator **Jepsen**. I do not think I asked it very well. I will try again.

In the soil tilth, which is to the agronomist the makeup of the composition of the soil and the relationship between the water and the granules and the ingredients and so on.

Now, it seems to me that this is an area that has not been utilized either in the research area or in the planning area or in the actual future policy area enough.

Do you feel that it could play an important role?

Dr. **Wakefield**. I think so. I think what you are asking is why don't we evaluate our soils and determine the production potential of them based on the physical conditions, such as tilth.

Senator **Jepsen**. Well, it seems to me the soil tilth would provide us, possibly, with some alternate, additional procedures and, maybe, solutions to retain the productivity; and it should be commensurate and work right in with erosion.

Certainly, the makeup of the soil has some direct bearing on how easily it erodes. I mean, clay does not move quite as fast as——

Dr. **Wakefield**. Yes, this factor is worked into the universal soil loss equation that takes into account the nature of the soil.

For instance, the soil that is high in silt and clay with very, very fine particles has a high value. It is easily washed down a slope; but the other things are the level of the slope, the degree of the slope. Factors such as that do enter in, but the kind of soil, yes, you are correct.

Senator **Jepsen**. As you indicated there are soils that, even with the slope, do not wash quite as badly. Maybe there is something we could mix or put in with the fertilizer that could keep it from eroding. That is what I am getting at. Is that possible? You are the professional.

Dr. **Wakefield**. Absolutely. It is the type of crop that is the key thing here. It is not in the soil addition. It is the type of groundcover.

Soil that is erodible should be maintained in some sort of permanent cover, such as hay or pasture, rather than corn or soybeans.

Senator **Jepsen**. I agree. We will start with you. In your opinion, should the Government programs of the FHA or farm commodity programs that are provided, should they require some soil conservation, water resource practices on the part of recipients?

Dr. **Wakefield**. Yes, they certainly should.

Mr. **Morin**. I agree.

Senator **Jepsen**. How about Daniel Varin?

Mr. **Varin**. Yes, sir.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Puchalski, do you agree?

Mr. **Puchalski**. I think no tilth is a good step in that direction.

Senator **Jepsen**. Are you saying that that should be made cross-compliancewise, that if the people receive some money, they should be required to go into no till if the land permits it?

Mr. **Puchalski**. If it induces the general use of the land to better protect the land from erosion and the like. This is one of the kinds of practices that is not only economical to the farmer, but in the long run will protect the lands from erosion.

Senator **Jepsen**. I am very familiar with the minimum till or no till. Out in the Midwest, we say it saves toil and oil and soil.

I do think it is a conservation practice that is really orbiting into most acceptance because of a combination of things. Ironically, the economy and the cost of production is up considerably.

Mr. **Puchalski**. In Rhode Island, the Wakefield soil conservation service staff and the University of Rhode Island introduced no till in the State.

Senator **Leahy**. I have a two-part question. It can probably be answered yes or no. First, do you feel the States and conservation districts should have more say in setting priorities, and do you feel the national priorities set out in the administration's national program for soil and water conservation are beneficial or not beneficial to us here in the Northeast?

Doctor Wakefield, you have the mike, so I will start with you and move down.

Dr. **Wakefield**. The first question was——

Senator **Leahy**. Do you feel States and local conservation districts should have more of a say?

Dr. **Wakefield**. I think so. That is the thing that has been missing here. Decisions have been made at a bureaucratic level. I think the local people know what is best for them. I think that is critical in this business of local involvement. It has to be clarified, too.

I think local involvement means that local people have to put up the money, too. Local decisions, I think, is the thing that is important here.

Senator **Leahy**. The second part is: Are the national priorities that are set out by the national program of soil conservation beneficial or not beneficial here in the Northeast?

Dr. **Wakefield**. I think in general the basic decisions are correct. What we must take into consideration is our own unique situation here.

So, I think, again, local involvement is necessary to make modifications in the basic priorities.

Mr. **Morin**. I can answer both of these questions the same way. State and local experts, so to speak, have a real handle on what the problem areas are in the region.

No one is going to say that soil erosion is good or that improper water management is bad. The way those objectives have been actually listed by the national program, I think, are the problem areas. We have, as I said, organized a special relationship with the conservation agencies, the USDA agencies over the last 40 or 50 years. We have been working with them.

I think that should reflect in the national priorities. I think the conservation priorities should be set from the bottom to the top, rather than vice versa.

Mr. **Varin**. I would certainly agree to the answer to the first question. It is people closest to the scene who should be asked what the problems are and what the workable solutions are.

In terms of priority setting to the degree that it has been done in the national program, that is, selecting two areas of not just emphasis, but almost exclusive concern for the entire country, I would say that although both of those problem areas have application in the Northeast and in Rhode Island, it would be impossible to select any two areas as the most critical, the highest priorities, for the entire country.

The country is too diverse for that kind of an approach under the limitations that we all recognize we have to live with, such as, financial, technical, and others.

I think priority setting to that stringent a degree at the national level, regardless of what the resulting priorities are, is not workable. The priorities must reflect national needs to a much greater degree than that system could ever accomplish.

Mr. **Puchalski**. What can I say?

Senator **Leahy**. You agree?

Mr. **Puchalski**. Certainly, I agree.

Senator **Leahy**. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. I want to thank this panel.

Would you, Doctor Wakefield, send to the committee your ideas regarding this targeting criteria and standards? If you have not already, would you please send it.

I would like to ask one person on the panel—decide among yourselves who should answer it just very, very briefly—about the acceptance and the financing of your farm protection buy out or system that you have in Rhode Island, the land use rights. What do you call them?

Mr. **Varin**. The purchase of development rights program was the subject of a statewide referendum in 1982. It was 1 of 11 referenda on the ballot at the general election.

Senator **Jepsen**. It carried?

Mr. **Varin**. It carried by the widest margin of any of the questions. One was defeated. The others carried. The others were approved, but not by the same margin.

In addition, it received a favorable vote in every city and town including those cities which are entirely urbanized and industrialized and are not in direct contact with agriculture. There is, clearly, widespread recognition of the need to preserve farmland in the State.

Senator **Jepsen**. The question on the referendum, did it include how it was going to be paid for?

Mr. **Varin**. Yes, the referendum was a bond issue. It was the borrowing instrument.

Senator **Jepsen**. So, they voted not only on the policy, but they voted on how to pay for it and voted, in fact, the money for it?

Mr. **Varin**. Yes. It was a $2 million bond issue that was the specific question that was to be voted on.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. Again, thank you very much. It was very interesting testimony. We spoke of the help received by the Soil Conservation Service in the past and in technical assistance for this farmland preservation.

Mr. **Morin**. Very quickly, this is a map and very usable scale that indicates where the prime and important farmlands are in the State. This is the portion of the State that includes Newport.

From that area, then, they went back and looking at the soil surface, they looked at the aerial photographs. They developed maps that showed actually where all of the farmland was in the State.

As Mr. Varin mentioned, we used this as an inventory for the farmland preservation program. This will give you an idea of where the land is located.

Senator **Jepsen**. You used these maps in the bond issue to estimate how much money you were going to need?

Mr. **Varin**. We estimated how much money we needed, but it was more a political question. It was how much money we thought we could get for the first stage.

Senator **Jepsen**. Now you wish, after the vote, that you had asked for more?

Mr. **Varin**. Yes. I think we could have asked for more. I think we will be successful when we go back to ask for more.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very much. Now we will go to Maine.

STATEMENT OF STUART SMITH, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES, STATE OF MAINE

Mr. **Smith**. I appreciate the opportunity to be here, and I appreciate both of you sitting through this testimony on a very, very hot afternoon and listening to the conservation concerns that we in the Northeast have.

I do have some written testimony, and I think, Mr. Chairman, I will paraphrase the first of this, if you do not mind. It will get us out of here quicker, I am sure.

Before delineating the conservation needs that we have in the State of Maine, just let me put our agriculture in perspective, if you will.

By the way, I am, for the record, Stuart Smith. I am commissioner of agriculture in the State of Maine. It may be surprising to some, but I have traveled in your part of the country, Mr. Chairman, to the great State of Iowa.

Our agriculture probably looks very small compared to yours. On the other hand, it is extremely valuable to our State. My written testimony refers to agriculture generating between $2 and $2.5 billion in economic activity. I just want to clarify that for the record, if I may.

Our farm income runs about $450 million per year. The value added to that agriculture product gives us a total product of about $1 billion to $1.25 billion per year, and we think we have a multiplier of somewhere around 2. That is where we get the $2 and $2.5 billion.

Agriculture and forestry in the State of Maine are by far the largest segment of our economy and makes up about 20 percent of the actual products that we produce.

We have about 700,000 acres of cropland. Of this, about 310,000 acres is harvested as row crops each year.

Potatoes are a major component in our agricultural economy. We are the third largest potato producer in the country, the largest producer in the eastern United States. Practically all of that production, well over 92 percent of it, is concentrated in the very northern part of the State in Aroostook County. That is where a good part of our soil erosion is.

In addition to potatoes, our other crops are apples and blueberries as well as vegetables with less erosion problems. In addition to those crops we have a large segment of the agriculture which is animal and poultry based, as many of the Northeastern States are. The dairy industry with the production of corn and hay also causes some erosion problems for us; but, more importantly, we have an animals waste disposal problem with both our animal and poultry industries.

That is a substantial part of our concerns in the State and we rank that in our planning as the second major conservation problem behind erosion.

To give you just some idea for the record of the extent of our erosion problem, our soils are eroding on the average of 5 tons per acre per year. This amounts to 1.5 million tons of soil lost annually. As you know, erosion should be reduced to somewhere around 3 tons per acre per year.

In the spring of 1983, about 162,000 acres of cropland in Maine were experiencing soil erosion in excess of that limit.

Approximately 15 percent of the State's eroded soil, which amounts to over 200,000 tons annually, makes its way into our lakes and streams, obviously causing some sort of a pollution problem, especially if it carries with it the sediments as well as pesticides and fertilizers.

As I indicated, the most serious erosion problems are in Aroostook County in our potato industry where 81,000 acres exceeds twice the tolerable level of 3 tons.

Ninety percent of all land that is eroding at rates over 10 tons per acre per acre per year, are in that area, also, of Aroostook County.

The animal waste management problem can be, I think, grasped by realizing only 16 percent of our poultry and livestock farms are equipped with systems that are adequate to handle the animal waste they produced in 1983. SCS resource data indicate that 1,839 farms in Maine need improved animal waste management systems.

Studies conducted under funding from section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act clearly identified animal waste runoff as a significant, in many cases the most significant, source of water quality degradation, affecting both water supplies and recreational water bodies.

Even though our department of environmental protection has been very active in cleaning up our rivers, in spite of that effort in water pollution cleanup, we still have a very substantial problem area of animal waste.

Really, our State department of environmental protection has not been as tough as it probably should have been on our farm people.

In addition to the conservation problems of erosion and animal waste, let me just touch for a minute on the rural development aspect of our conservation programs because they are very important to the State of Maine.

We, in the State of Maine, are taking an active role in developing the economies of our rural areas, which have been shown to lag behind the more urban areas of the State. I am sure that is not unlike many other States in New England as well as throughout the country.

The economies in these areas, especially in Maine, are tied up to natural resources, such as, farming, forestry, and the fisheries. Agriculture is a major source of economic activity in rural Maine. It is also closely tied to a certain quality of life and social fabric which lends a strong sense of community to our rural areas.

In some cases, these particular amenities have drawn increasing numbers of families to relocate into rural Maine. Land once abandoned as farmland is being reclaimed as a result of an increasing number of small and part-time farms in these areas.

I believe other witnesses have indicated the same thing is happening in their States. Statewide in 1974 we had an estimated 5,200 farms with an annual gross sales of less than $40,000; and in 1978, 6,200, a 19-percent increase.

There are other numbers that are more dramatic.

In that same period of time farms with annual gross sales of $20,000 to $40,000 decreased by 8 percent; part-time farms that have sales of $20,000 or less increased by 24 percent.

Clearly, there is a resurgence back, particularly, to small-scale agriculture in the State of Maine. The numbers are increasing, and it is bringing land back into production.

Servicing the needs of this new sector of agricultural activity is an important concern because of its relationship to rural economic growth. Servicing the broad economic development needs of rural areas may also provide support to agriculture in those areas by expanding the market for direct sales or increasing the availability of a range of allied services.

The resource conservation and development districts clearly reflect a recognition of this important linkage, and I want to encourage you as much as I can to continue support of these RC&D programs. I would like to touch on that a little later if I could.

A comment from the State of Maine, not just from me as commissioner, but as the State of Maine and the people concerned with conservation in that State.

Governor Brennan has demonstrated a strong concern for our conservation issues in Maine. He has recognized that our natural resources are a vital component in the State's economy. Just the night before last, Maine's legislature, with strong bipartisan support, approved Governor Brennan's proposal to create a project incentive fund that soil conservation districts can use to fund innovative demonstration projects on a competitive basis. The Maine legislature, as I said, just 2 nights ago at 11:30 in the evening approved $100,000 annually for this fund which will go to the soil and water commission to be allocated to districts on a competitive basis. These are challenge grants.

This is the first time that the State of Maine, through the legislature, has actually funded any kind of conservation programs like that. We provided some baseline funding to conservation districts, but this is the first time we put out some challenge grants.

I might say that the State budget that was approved 2 nights ago had originally many different programs for agriculture in terms of new or expanded initiatives. There was not unanimity among the legislature, like I am sure there always is on the Federal level, and we ended up with a minority and a majority report on this budget.

Both reports, the Democratic report and the Republican report contained the soil conservation programs that I referred to. It was only one of two programs that was supported by both parties. That is just an indication of the strong support.

We have made some gains in conservation in the State of Maine in the past few years. The average cropland erosion has been reduced by more than 8 percent according to SCS figures between 1982 and 1983.

I have in my testimony some data extracted from the SNAP report. That is on page 8. That is just selected counties showing the acreage and erosion rates from that acreage.

Basically, Mr. Chairman, coming from Iowa, some of these numbers are going to look a little small to you, I am sure; but it does point out a couple, I think, interesting aspects of conservation.

It does show that in the larger major agricultural areas of Aroostook County very little progress has been made. For instance, in central Aroostook conservation districts erosion rates of 6.9 tons per acre per year are reduced to 6.4 and then, finally, to 5.8 between 1979 and 1983.

In the Saint John Valley, which is more susceptible to erosion, we have done hardly anything: 6.9 to 6.2 in that period of time.

Now, at one of the small counties down around the coast, Knox-Lincoln, we have actually reduced, according to SCS figures, erosion from 13.3 to 4.8.

We are talking about acreage in the realm of 500 to 1,000 acres, which hardly makes one concise farm in the Midwest, I am sure.

I think the point is that even in those areas where you can put a concentration of resources in the small areas, you make a substantial gain; but when you get into larger areas that have major problems, it is much more difficult to get those kinds of achievements.

A word, if I may, about the RC&D's. I think they are extremely important not only in terms of conservation, but rural development. We have four RC&D's. They have been extremely valuable in addressing some of the broader issues of rural development. We see them as organizations ideally constituted and charged to be partners with us in our rural development effort.

RC&D's have the flexibility to address both the resource conservation and the rural development problems and opportunities. Additionally, they provide a forum for bringing together representatives of diverse local interests.

Because their objectives are so similar to ours, ours in the Department of Agriculture, and because the four in Maine are noted for their flexibility and responsiveness, it has been a pleasure working with them on many of their projects. They have provided us with a ready-made citizens advisory panel.

Our experience has been that if RC&D's were eliminated as several administrations have proposed, somehow we would have to recreate them. I think they are that valuable, especially to the State of Maine.

For instance, we have worked with the Saint John-Aroostook district to find suitable septic waste disposal and also to explore the possibility of beneficial use of sludge for agricultural purposes.

The down east RC&D district, obviously, the one down on the coast, has had a long-term interest in the State's peat development policy and continues to address the issues regarding peat utilization and harvesting.

By the way, Mr. Chairman, we are looking at peat as a possible means of large-scale application of the agricultural lands to build tilth, organic matter, and slow down erosion all at once.

Time and Tide, another RC&D, has been the three-time winner among New England RC&D's. It has truly been a catalyst in bringing people together to address the farmland loss issue.

In southern Maine, the Threshold to Maine RC&D has responded boldly to the needs of small and part-time farmers. It has organized a farmers' market and published producer directories for consumers. It is now working with my department to address the problems of safe disposal of pesticide containers.

It may be of interest to you that our legislature also just passed this week a deposit on pesticide containers to get them back into the cycle so that the dealer has then the responsibility of disposal.

With that, I would like to make some comments on the national program for soil and water conservation issues that you are addressing today.

First of all, obviously, is the issue of targeting, which has been, I guess, the primary concern of most people, at least in the Northeast.

The most significant aspect of the new USDA soil and water conservation program is the introduction of the concept of targeting resources to meet critical national problems. While supporting targeting—and I do support targeting; I think most of the people in Maine do support targeting—I have two primary concerns related to it.

The first is the need for a balance between this approach and the need to maintain a certain baseline level of support to the nontargeted areas. We need to continue some level of technical and financial assistance to those areas, those nontargeted areas, to allow them to address problems which, although not of national significance, are of State or local significance.

We also need to be conscious of the need for programs that are not only restorative but preventative. This means installing new practices before a problem develops, maintaining those practices which have been applied in the past, and replacing or altering existing practices in order to meet changing production technologies.

Let me expand for a moment on the need to have programs that address problems of State or local significance. Our State and the national soil and water conservation program share the same number one priority, that is, to reduce excessive soil erosion.

After that, however, we break down, however. Nationally, the second priority is to conserve water usage and prevent flooding, while Maine's second priority is animal waste management.

I have already indicated the magnitude of our animal waste problem, which is frequently also a water supply problem of a different sort than targeted nationally, but equally significant to Maine. Although our Aroostook County districts would be targeted for additional funds due to their severe soil erosion problems, other areas of the State, where 90 percent of all animal units are located, would realize significant program reductions.

The need to have a certain baseline program to work to prevent new problems is also pressing in Maine in light of new pressures on our soil resources from increasing numbers of farmers and an expanding cropland base. According to the SCS 1983 update of the SNAP study, cropland acres have increased 2.3 percent since 1979. That increase was totally in nontargeted areas.

Those areas that qualify for targeting under the national program have not seen an increase in cropland that other nontargeted areas have.

The RCA plan calls for reduced base level funding over the next 5 years in a stepped schedule of reductions equal to 5 percent per year. Although, I do not possess the proper data and methodology to determine if this will result in an optimal level, that determination should be made before a particular baseline level is established and finalized.

I don't question but that there might be a more optimal allocation of resources for conservation dollars by reducing our baseline level and redirecting that into targeting.

But, I am not sure that that determination has been made, and that does concern me. At least, I have not seen the methodology or the data which would support that determination at an optimal level.

My second concern with targeting is that the process used for identifying areas for targeting be rational and consider a broad range of factors other than gross erosion rates.

I believe that conservation money should be targeted to those areas that demonstrate the most need with respect to societal benefits and that the criteria used in those determinations should be carefully developed. I don't think I have seen that so far at the national level.

With respect to soil erosion I would urge that the total amount of soil being lost per acre should not be the single criteria. The need of the soil to remain productive should be an important determination. In some areas, especially in the State of Maine, soils are very fragile and need more conservation practices in order to maintain productivity than areas where soils are less fragile.

Second, the value of the production from the land should be a criteria in determining the impact of erosion. It may be more beneficial to society in the long run to maintain agricultural land around population areas like the Northeast in order to minimize transportation and distribution costs of food in the future. The value location should be a consideration in the criteria for targeting.

Third, the process of identifying objectives with respect to targeting should be well defined and constantly reviewed. I happen to believe they are going to be changing over time as the economic factors change.

Thus, soil erosion may be the top priority now, but agricultural land lost to development may be the top priority as economic factors change. I think we have got to be flexibile in evaluating what objectives targeting should meet.

The conservation partnership: We agree with the emphasis on strengthened conservation partnership, and Governor Brennan's new project incentive fund that I mentioned earlier is evidence of our commitment to the partnership concept. We believe this fund will strengthen the working relationship between SCS, ASCS, the districts, and the State Conservation Commission.

We also support requiring recipients of FmHA loans to have or have applied to Soil Conservation Service for conservation plans. I believe cross-compliance is a sound mechanism to assure contact between the new farm operator and the SCS. It assures consistency in Federal policy and provides benefits to all the agencies involved.

While SCS and ASCS encourage soil conservation, FmHA is insuring the sustained value of the land which generates the income to repay its loan.

I might add here that we also have recently adopted, in fact, this past session of legislature, a program, natural resource financing and marketing authority, in which we intend to use State bond funds to finance agricultural and other natural resource projects. We have gone much further than cross-compliance suggested in the national program.

We require farmers participating in that lending program to have a conservation plan and to implement it. In addition to that, and even more importantly, we require that they participate in our farmland and open space tax program.

That tax program in the State of Maine imposes severe penalties on landowners by requiring, for instance, payment of up to a third of the difference between the sales price and agricultural value upon sale if that sale is to a conversion use whether or not there have been any tax advantages by being in the program.

So, that could be a severe penalty; but, yet, we require that in our State program. We require participants in local programs to be in compliance with that program, also.

A word about pilot projects.

We hope to see the pilot project concept mentioned in RCA supported. Such projects encourage innovative efforts to solve problems. For example, we have a proposal to demonstrate the effectiveness of irrigation coupled with conservation in improving productivity and decreasing erosion in Aroostook County. We have yet to find a program or funds in USDA which meet these joint objectives.

We have pursued that for 2 years. We have been through a lot of programs. The Corps of Engineers is interested in that program at this point. The USDA did not have any program to fit that criteria.

Data collection and analysis: We are very supportive of a strengthened capability for data collection and analysis within SCS and other USDA agencies. The links between conservation practices, production response, and economic impacts need to be clearly defined. We are most interested in the extensive field appraisal of resource management systems study, known as the FARMS study, led by SCS in the State of Maine. It is in its third year.

Because of funding limitations, that project has been continued only on a limited basis using funds received from a private foundation. USDA should be able to commit funds for such important research projects for the number of years required to produce valid data for analysis.

That is an extensive and well defined study, as I said, led by SCS, with participation by the university. It is a substantial data collection effort to determine the relationship between resource management programs and yields and quality of crop.

We look forward to that data. In fact, I think at the Federal level, SCS is looking forward to that data, also.

Very, very briefly, other funding issues: While I realize that the 1984 budget appropriation process is almost completed, I would also like to briefly address the overall need for Federal support based upon the problems, opportunities, and capacities of Maine.

Specifically, we support the proposed increases in the conservation operation funds and hope that funds will be restored to agriculture conservation programs of ASCS.

These two programs are a valuable and reliable source of assistance with an established and increasingly effective local delivery mechanism. They account in large part for the steady reduction in soil loss in Maine.

Without full funding for ACP, we will lose an important component of the conservation partnership which the RCA is recommending. We also hope that Congress will continue to recognize the value of RC&D's and appropriate the funds necessary to keep these organizations operating.

As I mentioned earlier, the State of Maine made a commitment to better conservation earlier this week. We look for the Federal Government to join us in that commitment.

I appreciate, Mr. Chairman, the opportunity to have been here today.

Senator **Jepsen**. You have answered by cross-compliance question, so I do not have any questions.

Senator **Leahy**. I have only got one, a quick one. Commissioner, you spoke of the growth in nontargeted areas of Maine. Does that mean that the national planning does not work?

Mr. **Smith**. That means that we could find increased erosion problems and other conservation problems because those areas where we see growth, increased growth in cropland, will have less and less Federal conservation support.

Senator **Leahy**. Does it mean the national plan was not on target?

Mr. **Smith**. The targeting was not totally on target. I think that, as I said, the targeting is a valid concept; but, I think, we have got to be very careful to maintain a certain baseline level.

I am not sure that has been adequately determined at the Federal level.

Senator **Leahy**. It is really that its execution is not valid?

Mr. **Smith**. I think that is true.

Senator **Leahy**. Do the State's local conservation districts have more of a say in setting those priorities?

Mr. **Smith**. To a certain degree, yes. I do think, however, that maintaining an adequate agricultural productivity is the responsibility of the Federal Government. I think they have got to meet that responsibility.

Now, we would like to see them, obviously, meet that in a way that local organizations can have maximum determination in their own areas. It would probably be well if many of those conservation costs actually were handled by the farmer and, therefore, put into the food system.

That may cause certain disequilibriums, dislocations in the agricultural economy that we cannot handle. I think the Federal Government has got to be the ultimate responsible party to assure that we do have agricultural productivity capability in the future.

Senator **Leahy**. The national priorities set out by the administration's national program for soil and water conservation, does that help the Northeast or hurt the Northeast?

Mr. **Smith**. I suspect it hurts the Northeast.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Mr. Smith. Now, we will hear from Massachusetts. You may proceed. Again, I would remind you that your testimony will be entered into the record as if read. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD GELPKE, SUPERVISOR, MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT, LITTLETON, MASS.

Mr. **Gelpke**. I am Richard Gelpke, and I am foremost a supervisor on the Middlesex conservation district in Massachusetts. I would like to present John Barrus and Roger Allbee, who you know.

I want to preface our remarks by saying that we appreciate you coming all the way here, although for you, Senator Leahy it is coming home. Again, we very much appreciate the opportunity to present our testimony.

In preparing our remarks, we sat down beforehand and identified those things in response to the program. Each of us concentrated on separate items. The fact that we do not overlap, does not mean that we think those items are unimportant.

What I would like to do is defer first to John Barrus and have his comments. Then, perhaps, Roger will speak; and then I will followup.

STATEMENT OF JOHN BARRUS, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU, WALTHAM, MASS.

Mr. **Barrus**. Senator Jepsen, I might say that I might help you out on those 100 years of farming. The family farm we own out in the town of Goshen, Mass., is made up of several pieces of land that various and sundry families used to own, one of whom was the Jepsens. We have the Jepsen lot there. So, that was the middle 1700's or early 1800's.

Senator **Jepsen**. That is before we moved west.

Mr. **Barrus**. I am not sure whether it was your family that developed this particular breed of cows we raise there, the pointed nose.

They eat the grass between the rocks, if necessary. Sorry about that, Senator. He has them up here, too.

I would like to state that we in the Northeast are most grateful for your presenting us the opportunity to appear before your subcommittee in our area.

These are complex issues of considerable importance to the many farming people in this region. I'm about the only one representing farmers here. At least the schedule says so. I'm from the Farm Bureau.

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, representing over 90 percent of the commercial farmers in the State have a large stake in government's approaches to these problems. The many costs of doing business must, somehow, be reduced if this important industry is to continue.

Farm Bureau has historically held that the "least government is the best government." However, as society has continued to put pressure on agriculture, both direct and indirect, it has become more apparent that State and Federal governments must relieve some of the burden.

As you will hear from others testifying, although it's going to be me again, as the scheduled witnesses could not be here, Massachusetts has a very successful purchase of development rights program for agriculture.

We like to think we sort of made the benefit of those first few States who made mistakes. Now, Connecticut and Rhode Island have borrowed from us, but we have a good program going here. This is an example of a fine cooperative spirit between State and local governments and rural and urban citizens.

Without the assistance from the Soil Conservation Service this program would fall by the wayside. In the notice of this hearing, one of the questions suggested to be addressed was, "Should the States be assuming more responsibility for conservation assistance?"

The answer as far as we are concerned is, "Yes." I don't have to tell you, though, with the many social services pressures and other necessary financial considerations it will not be easy to add much to the State's budgets. Our State is just debating our budget now.

It appears important to finish the soil mapping program being done by SCS. These maps will be essential for States to plan future land use policies. They will be invaluable for communities to deal with the myriad of land issues coming before them. Agricultural land can be identified quickly in order not to inflict irreparable harm to it.

And speaking of community involvement, in Massachusetts, it is of great significance that the technical assistance is available to them from SCS in working out environmental issues.

One area of concern to the farmer is the number of individual local, State and Federal agencies he must contact and from which he receives orders of conditions for activities he needs to undertake to conduct his business.

What must be worked out are some incentives and assurances that a "one stop" permitting plan can be developed. Nothing is more frustrating for the farmers to have to wait on a half a dozen agencies to respond to his request to conduct some activity necessary to his operation. Obviously, he depends on the calendar and the weather conditions for his livelihood and cannot store his product on the shelf until the redtape has been untangled.

It will be a considerable relief for agriculture if during your deliberation there can be developed a cooperative spirit in which Federal agencies can present a common response to agricultural needs, and can present a program of technical methods of operation which can be acceptable to State and local governments in order to relieve the farmer from a whole lot more requirements imposed by them.

It would be great if a farmer had received a plan for his particular agricultural project from SCS which met all State and local requirements and, thus, needed only to be presented to them.

One of the other questions presented was, "Should the Federal Government require a farmer to apply conservation practices in return for Federal assistance under other USDA programs?"

This question seems to require a "yes" answer. There can be really no justification for farmers to not use good conservation practices; but, as I'm sure you are aware, if it means he is to expend beyond his ability to make it economical, there would be little benefit for such imposition. There must be an economic balance developed with incentives incorporated to strike such balance.

The Northeast agricultural industry must be encouraged as we look into future demands for food and fiber. When one notes that nearly one-fourth of the entire U.S. population is within 600 miles of the Massachusetts Connecticut River Valley, it becomes apparent that viable agriculture is essential to this region.

An overall service which would be most useful for State and local planning would be the gathering of agricultural data, that is, how much water is used for agriculture in each State; how are we using it; how much land is available for adequate quality and quantity for agriculture; how much land is lost due to erosion. Some of these factors are critical to the industry.

I am going to stop with that presentation. I have one more, which I would like to give, and this is the presentation—well, he was to make it for the commissioner. I am making it for him, Tim Storrow, who is our director of land use.

First, let me applaud all the efforts that have gone into the RCA investigation and report and your own efforts in attempting to tailor these various programs to the requirements imposed by fiscal austerity.

We agree that it is tremendously important to inventory our natural productive resources and to spend the taxpayers' money as wisely as possibly to obtain the greatest benefits that given funding will allow.

We do have some reservations, however, regarding the details of the preferred program and how the application of the declared priorities will affect the situation in Massachusetts. National targeting seems inappropriate to a program of assisting all States on an equitable basis.

Conservation problems vary greatly from region to region, and our program needs and priorities here in Massachusetts are quite different from those expressed in the preferred program. Erosion and upstream flood control are minor considerations to us when compared to water supply and conservation or to the irreversible loss of our prime and significant farmland to other nonagricultural uses.

Attached is a graph which depicts how different the RCA public concerns in Massachusetts are from the rest of the country. That graph is in this booklet which we will be presenting.

The RCA report sets as its first priority to target areas where erosion threatens long-term agricultural productivity. We can only assume that in USDA parlance this would refer to sheet, rill, gully, or wind erosion; undoubtedly of great importance in some parts of the country.

Our type of erosion, however, occurs in blocks of 50, 100, or 200 acres at a crack when our farms are sold for nonagricultural development. Let me dramatize my point.

The report refers to erosion losses of 2 to 14 tons per acre. However, using the figures of "1 inch of soil over 1 acre weighs about 150 tons," from the footnote on page 33, each acre irreversibly lost to agriculture through conversion to other uses loses 900 tons of 6-inch topsoil or 1,800 tons of 12-inch topsoil from productivity forever. Also lost is any Federal cost share money which has been put into those farms for conservation practices through the past year.

We would not favor block grants at the expense of current programs. These programs have been reduced significantly in real dollars over the past few years, and any further reduction would be robbing Peter to pay Paul and would seriously penalize the whole effort.

A better method of accommodating programs to fit State needs would be to give the States a say in targeting and priority setting.

I believe that requiring matching money for block grants from already embattled State legislatures would not be productive, especially if the national priorities had little application to State needs. It is not clear whether the $40,000,000 we have already appropriated for our farmland preservation program would be eligible for Federal matching funds.

Attached is a copy of the 1982 annual report of the Massachusetts agricultural preservation restriction program now in its fifth year. To date under this program the development rights to over 8,000 acres of farmland in the Commonwealth have been purchased at a cost of approximately $14,000,000.

Soils information provided by the Soil Conservation Service is critical to the decisionmaking process, and SCS has been an important link in this program. However, there are regions of the State still not soil mapped. High priority should be given to completion of the field work and publication of soil survey reports.

Within the USDA there are a number of programs which may directly contribute to erosion in Massachusetts. Here in this State, we take the word "erosion" to mean the direct loss of our agricultural land through conversion out of agriculture.

For example, the Farmers Home Administration has been directly involved in a number of cases of either directly subsidizing the conversion of land or selling farms for development that they have taken through foreclosure. The national program does not address problems such as these.

In conclusion, we would suggest that at whatever level of funding proves possible, maximum conservation of natural resources and minimum waste of financial resources will be achieved if the USDA programs are geared closely to State and local needs. Gross national statistics and summations do not form a valid basis for the determination of priorities of disparate regions. That is by Tim Storrow. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Mr. Barrus. All right. Mr. Allbee.

STATEMENT OF ROGER ALLBEE, ON BEHALF OF AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST AND SOIL CONSERVATION PROJECT

Mr. ALLBEE. Actually, I am not really appearing on behalf of the Massachusetts group, and that is why I did not meet with them.

I am appearing before your committee as a private citizen who did work as a professional staff member of the House Committee on Agriculture on soil and water conservation issues.

I do remember talking with you one day with Rex Tracy in your office about the conservation grants program for 1981.

Mr. GELPKE. Let the record show that we are delighted to have him with us today.

Senator JEPSEN. I am delighted to have him here, also. He has visited with me. He is enjoying his tour of duty and looks forward to a long, productive association.

Mr. ALLBEE. I am also appearing on behalf of the American Farmland Trust and its soil conservation project of which I am a task force advisor.

I want to review some of the findings of that project. Bob Gray, project director, has already shared some of the findings with you, I believe.

Senator Huddleston, Senator Leahy, and some of their other Senate colleagues should be commended for the 1977 RCA legislation; it was the first major attempt to inventory our Nation's resources. It is unfortunate that the process did not provide the information envisioned.

It did not address the critical soil conservation problems of the country because of the rivalries and jealousies of USDA agencies.

It became a document based upon what would Congress accept instead of what is the problem and proposing meaningful solutions and leaving it to the political process to decide upon these.

The Farmland Trust soil conservation project evolved from this dilemma, and was endorsed by the chairman and ranking member of the Conservation Subcommittee of the House Agriculture Committee; 700 farmers were interviewed in six States in the Midwest. The project team identified possible solutions and answered some of the questions that should have been answered long ago.

For example, conservation practices have been concentrated on the land with the lowest erosion potential and not on more highly erodible land.

The ASCS-ACP funding is largely ineffective in controlling our worst erosion problems. No preference for funding is made on the basis of erosion severity.

Farmers surveyed did not feel that the expectance of receiving cost sharing was a very important factor in implementing a conservation practice.

From a Northeast point or view, the study did not address some of the issues that Senator Leahy has been a champion of and called our attention to: Problems such as water quality, both subsurface and ground water, as well as agricultural land protection. Those are issues that are critical to the Northeast.

I might also add that the study points out that the national conservation policy that we have today is ineffective. The agencies that exist have done a fairly effective job, but new approaches may be necessary. We are all aware that there are severe constraints on the budget process these days and that expanded new funds of any magnitude are not available to these agencies.

We lack a consistent, effective national conservation policy. A policy that ties the commodity programs together with conservation program objectives.

Anyone who has studied the issue knows that the commodity programs must be tied together with conservation objectives if there is going to be a consistent and long-term conservation program in this country.

Some of you have been looking at the legislation that would establish such a policy. You are to be commended for this and for asking the tough questions: Should we be paying farmers farm income stabilization at the same time we pay them for carrying out conservation programs?

I might add, Senator Leahy and Senator Jepsen, that there are authorities in the 1981 farm bill for conservation, such as targeting for special areas.

The Northeast, of course, does not like to see funds taken away from it for targeting or for a grants program.

The intent of the grants program is to encourage participation of local units of government.

I would like to add at the end of this part of my testimony, Senator Leahy, that the administration has not implemented the farmland protection policy provisions in the 1981 farm bill. You were instrumental in getting this adopted, Senator Leahy.

For a few moments, I would like to comment on the need for a national agricultural policy. Now that I am away from Washington, I can reflect on policy a little better than I could have then. We do not have a national agricultural policy, today. We have only bits and pieces of such a policy.

Senator **Jepsen**. When did you last have one?

Mr. **Allbee**. Probably 1933 when many of the programs were enacted. What we have today, basically, are fragments. The farm bill is basically a bidding war between competing and often conflicting interests.

It is politically accurate when it is passed, but it is not a long-term policy. It does not address long-term policy needs.

We do not have an effective long-term agricultural policy. I must commend you, Senator Jepsen, for doing some work in the Joint Economic Committee on this subject. I would ask you, though, to transcend politics and to elevate the subject or issue to a higher level, either congressionally appointed or Presidentially appointed special commission or task force. This group could be patterned after the bipartisan group that studied and made recommendations on the social security program. There is a need to develop a national agriculture policy through such a process.

If such a long-term policy is not developed, we will not have a policy tailored to the next century that is unencumbered by the baggage of the past century.

Senator **Jepsen**. Did I understand you to say, for the record, that the Joint Economic Committee is politically——

Mr. **Allbee**. You are having hearings on agriculture policies, I believe?

Senator **Jepsen**. Yes; that is correct, very extensive.

Mr. **Allbee**. Which is very commendable; but I am recommending that you have a group that includes not only the political side, but the nonpolitical side. Such a group is necessary, I believe, when developing a visionary long-term agricultural policy for our Nation.

Senator **Leahy**. In other words, a commission—I think you mentioned social security—of elected officials and nongovernment officials.

Mr. **Allbee**. That is correct, Senator.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Gelpke.

Mr. **Gelpke**. Thank you, Senator. If it is OK for a nondairy farmer to address you, I would be happy to do so. In fact, I am not a farmer at all. If that is still OK, I will proceed.

You have heard a lot of testimony, as have I and all of us sitting here today; and I would like to simply summarize what I have here.

I have some material here for you. I would like to include for the record, if it is permissible, this document which John referred to, "Massachusetts Land and Water: Will There Be Enough?" [1]

It is one of the physical byproducts of the RCA process because what it does is, it summarizes very graphically the situation in Massachusetts.

I represent Middlesex County in Massachusetts, the conservation district there. It is probably one of the largest populated counties in the eastern part of the United States, outside of the New York boroughs, with about 1⅓ million people in Middlesex County.

Please do not write us off as nonagricultural, any more than the people in Rutland would be most unhappy to hear that they are not industrial. We tend to do this. We write States off as either a farm State or an industrial State or whatever.

I want to comment on the RCA process, what it has meant to Massachusetts. We knew before that process that there were certain trends that were very significant for us: The diversion of prime farmland to other uses—of which you have heard much—serious threats to our water supplies.

We import 85 percent of our food and fiber in Massachusetts, a figure which has not changed for a long period of time. We have erosion of our fragile soils which is a special term apparently recently developed to talk about that notion that a very small loss here has a very significant impact compared to other areas.

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[1] Not received as of date of press release.

The RCA appraisal process forcibly brought home the true nature of those forces.

The preferred plan is a logical national response to the 1980 appraisal. The concepts of targeting as a redirection of conservation activities will clearly focus more assistance on certain areas and resource problems. Targeting should, indeed must be, aimed at the true problem. Again, I mention here the fragile soil idea which I will not go into. It has been mentioned before.

I am urging that local and regional complexities not be overlooked or lost in the need to fit standard definitions or preconceived ideas or situations. We applaud the continued base level funding concept but note that the fine print says to expect "fewer personnel and less funds". It doesn't say what the base is.

As one direct result of the RCA process, SCS has developed in their conservation operations budget, the C0-01 budget mentioned earlier, a new allowance formula which gives certain weights to various of 12 identified resource problems.

Two of these factors, which are very significant to us are the prime farmland conversion pressure and urbanizing areas, with a total of 100 while urbanizing areas are weighted at 1½ out of 100, and prime farmland conversion is 1. That totals out to 2.5 out of a weight of 100.

Not only in my county, but in my State, much of southern New England and Northeast, the Boswash Megalopolis from southern Maine to past Washington, those are key elements, is rated very low.

In a county such as mine with 1⅓ million people, that, obviously, is a very, very significant problem. We do have prime farmland in the county, and we are losing it to tremendous economic forces at work. We are trying hard to stem those.

How has the RCA process worked for us? The answer is mixed. The major outlines of assessment and analysis of trends nas been made; in the interpretation of the facts and how to adjust the program management to be effective, please do not overlook the local complexities. We have a productive agricultural base here which needs all the help it can get.

Very briefly, the Senator asked if we felt States ought to be assuming more of a role in assistance. We believe so; however, I would point out the situation in Massachusetts regarding conservation districts—I am secretary of the State organization—we now have 16 districts. We had 15. We invented the first fully urban conservation district in the country. It is Suffolk County, which covers Boston.

We have a total State appropriation to support those 16 conservation districts in the State of Massachusetts a sum total of $40,000. Eight thousand of that goes to the State committee, and that winds up with $2,000 per district. You cannot do very much with $2,000.

Now, we talked here about numbers. I fiddled with the numbers a little bit. My county, Middlesex, if I take $2,000, I figured out that each person gets 14 mils, a little over a tenth of a cent. Each acre gets 38 mils. You can play with these figures.

We on the local level target that assistance to specific problems. Fortunately, in Massachusetts, conservation districts raise a lot of money on their own. We raised about $150,000, so our total level of conservation assistance from districts themselves is about $200,000. For a State of 5½ million people, 5 million acres, that does not really go very far.

We have an agricultural land retention program, which John has commented on. There is a statement from Tim Storrow regarding that.

We have a need for better, timely, and continuing data gathering. There has been some discussion on that. Let me just give you one example of that.

In Middlesex County, Mass., Worcester County, the southern part of Essex County, Norfolk County, and Suffolk County in which there are some 3½ million people, we do not have a published soil survey. I am told it will take a decade before that is published.

You recognize, Senator Leahy, particularly I am sure, that governments in New England, the local town governments, are the decisionmakers who need this material. Very often they are not terribly sophisticated in that. We have simply been unable to get that information out to them.

The crime is that we have the material. It is in the file offices. People have to know to come and get it. If it was published, we would be better off. Even part of that is still not available.

In conclusion, it is essential that the conservation activities of the USDA, highlighted in the RCA process, do not become so manipulated and biased that States in similar situations as Massachusetts become casualties of the "numbers game".

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you. I would just like very briefly to ask a question of you. Do you feel that the soil conservation practices should be an integral part and required part of the participation, recipient of any farm commodity program, money or loans, so on?

Mr. **Gelpke**. Yes, I do. I would say that is 75 percent worth because in our RCA response three out of four people thought that. I would agree with that.

Senator **Jepsen**. John.

Mr. **Barrus**. You might be interested to know I had a call this morning from one of our dairy committee who was not able to attend last night's meeting. When I was discussing where I was going today, he said, "You know, I was going to put a ditch in for slope control and so on, but," he says, "I can only get 10-percent reduction in the erosion. Thus, I cannot qualify because I am supposed to get 12 percent."

The specifics of what are to be done are what troubled me in the issue. If the fellow cannot afford to do it, he better not do it. I think we have to have an economic balance there.

Senator **Jepsen**. Roger, do you have any comments?

Mr. **Allbee**. No; I covered that in my testimony.

Senator **Jepsen**. I do not have anything else.

Senator **Leahy**. I think we have covered the points very, very well. Roger, it is good to see you, again.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very much. Now, we have two gentlemen from Maine. Would you please come forward?

STATEMENT OF JOHN FOGLER, CHAIRMAN, MAINE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CORINNA, MAINE

Mr. **Fogler**. Senator Jepsen, Senator Leahy, I am John Fogler. I am a dairyman from Corinna, Maine. I have been a longtime member of the local soil and water conservation districts. I am presently chairman of the State soil and water conservation commission. I have some prepared testimony here which I would like to introduce into the record.[1]

Senator **Jepsen**. Your testimony will be entered into the record as if read, I would appreciate any summary you may make as we will be running a fairly tight ship here.

Mr. **Fogler**. I would like to make a few comments to expand on what I consider the most important parts of this testimony, this written testimony here.

One, I farm with two sons and a nephew. We are dairy farmers. They farm with me because they want to. They have abilities which could make them a living in many other ways. I simply say this because it is a voluntary action with them, and I am a firm believer in voluntary concepts of conservation.

This was a rather difficult decision for me 10 years ago. I have had to bite my tongue a number of times, but I gave them a lot of responsibility. I feel I had to in order that they would have the interest and want to continue on.

I would like to say that it is my opinion that these farms that are family-owned and family-operated are the reason that this country is so productive in agriculture.

I think this concept, this concept of volunteerism, is what makes other nations so jealous of what we can do. I think we should protect that at any cost.

I think it is important to realize that the farms in New England, while they are not as numerous as in other areas of the country, they are very important to the economy of our area; and in the future, could probably be very important to the Nation as a whole.

One of my major concerns in the agricultural bill is the funding for the Soil Conservation Service. It has been my experience that one of the key reasons we have been able to make progress in conservation is the relationship between the landowner, the district, and the Soil Conservation Service.

The Soil Conservation Service is unique in that they are immune from a lot of the pressures Government agencies have. Their expertise is well-recognized. It is respected in the field.

As a district supervisor, it is a great help to me and my district to be able to converse with a farmer, work with a farmer; and when he has questions, simply say that technical aspects are up to the Soil Conservation Service. We have no control over that. I think this is good. I think it is a strength to the program.

I would like to say just a few words on cooperation between agencies. In the State of Maine, the cooperation is very good at the State level and extremely good at our county level. We have been able to agree on identifying problems and agreeing on solutions and cooperate in putting our resources to the solution of these problems.

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[1] Not received as of date of press release.

I think one of the greatest examples of that is our use of the long-term agreement through ASCS in the State of Maine.

In our district I found these one of the finest tools that we have had available to us for a number of reasons. One, when you enter into a contract with a farmer—most of these are 5-year contracts—you are in his yard for 5 years. Your D.C. builds a relationship with that man. They build respect for each other.

This is the way conservation is done because if you cannot win that man to the value of conservation, both to himself and to the Nation, you have not accomplished much with your investment in money.

This puts a lot of pressure on the Soil Conservation Service in that their people have to be very able. I do not think any longer it is enough just to know that technical aspect of how to build a ditch, how to do this because they have to know about agriculture production with this farm.

We are doing a great deal of work in our area now with changes in cover crops. These are things that you have got to know what you are talking about. You have got to be able to work with that farmer.

This is the same thing as in our manure disposal operations that we have constructed. The public can invest considerable money in manure disposal operations; but if the farmer does not use it properly, you have gained nothing.

This contract allows you to exposure to him over a period of time in which you can train him. I see this as one of the great problems in agriculture today. That is the education of our farmers.

One other thing I want to mention briefly is that in our district we were privileged to have a Public Law 566 project for land treatment to protect water quality. These are under 10-year contracts. The same thing applies to this that applies to what I said about LTA.

They have been very successful. In the area, 90 percent of the landowners are under contract in this project.

Most of the other cases are cases that we have cooperation between agencies. We worked with farmers. We knew it would be foolish to invest the taxpayers' money.

I think contracts or this type of approach is good for a district because it makes you realize, as the district supervisor, that you have a responsibility to the landowners, but you have a tremendous responsibility to the taxpayers. If you are going to feel right about what you have done, you have got to take him by the hand and show him and be proud of what you have done.

I appreciate the opportunity to come here and have you listen to what I need to say.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very much. It was straight from the heart. I appreciate it. It was very interesting.

STATEMENT OF FRANK RICKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MAINE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mr. **Ricker**. My name is Frank Ricker. I am executive director of the soil and water conservation commission. I work for the gentleman to my right, Commissioner Smith.

I would like to second what they had to say here today. I am here mainly because the gentleman here got up at 1:45 to milk his cows. I helped him drive here.

I also appreciate the opportunity that you have given us to speak on this matter. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Frank. Yours has been the shortest testimony today. In supporting Mr. Fogler and helping him, my family has a dairy; and we milk at 10 o'clock every night and 10 o'clock every morning, as you know, 365 days out of the year.

It is a lot of hard work, dedication, and commitment. It was very inspiring and very pleasant to hear about your family project together.

I congratulate and commend you for it. You are right. You have to make it attractive enough to have a family work together. While it is very admirable and ideal that the families work as a unit, it takes working at it to make it work. From what you have said, you are doing very well with it. I congratulate you.

I also gathered from your comment that you would hesitate to make any cross-compliance mandatory. Did I misread that?

Mr. **Fogler**. I would agree with that. I would rather see anything done through cooperation. It is awful hard to go to a farmer and say, "You have to do this because there is a law here."

Senator **Jepsen**. Even though you pay the farmer some money? You see, the question is: Should there be cross-compliance where a farmer receives—I am not trying to persuade your answer—the farmer receives a $100,000 loan with much lower interest than he would be able to get or not be able to get one anywhere else, or the farmer participates in a commodity program where he gets some advance payments and so on? Should he have integrated in there some conservation and water resource practices that are required? Again, that was the basis.

Mr. **Fogler**. I don't have a great deal of objection to this because when you go to a farmer with a plan, you give him alternatives.

Senator **Jepsen**. And he does not have to take that? He does not have to participate in that program or take that loan?

Mr. **Fogler**. No; so I wouldn't object to that.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you have anything about that, Frank?

Mr. **Ricker**. I think the Maine Association of Conservation Districts in their last meeting voted in favor of compliance. We are aware of the problem. We have taken that step.

Senator **Jepsen**. It has not always been that way, has it?

Mr. **Ricker**. No.

Senator **Jepsen**. You would not have gotten that 4 years ago, probably.

Mr. **Ricker**. Not 2 years ago.

Senator **Jepsen**. Prior to your coming in, I told the group my experience in the last 4 years. Four years ago it would have been 9 to

10 that everybody would say, "Absolutely not. It has got to be all voluntary."

Today, Frank, it is just the opposite. That comes from increasing awareness and concern and education about our problems.

Mr. RICKER. I think people are a lot more aware that we have to be a lot more accountable to the public. I think, you know, that is the reason, changing attitudes.

Senator LEAHY. I have no further questions of those two witnesses. I really appreciate their coming such a long distance here today. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. I want the record to show that the commitment that John Fogler has shown is one of the reasons that we do solve our problems in this country, by working together.

Anyone who would be working and milking at 2 o'clock in the morning and then get up and drive such a long distance on such a warm day to provide the testimony he did, that is not only admirable, but it is characteristic of the resolve and commitment that has made this country great and made it possible for us to do things from the bottom up in this country where we derive our powers from the people.

I commend you. I thank you for coming. Have a safe trip home. Thank you, Frank, for driving Mr. Fogler.

Senator JEPSEN. Do you have any closing statements, Senator?

Senator LEAHY. I would just like to make an observation. I would like to thank this young woman who has taken the notes all day long. She has done a terrific job for us.

I also want to thank your staff and the committee's staff and my own, John Letteri, and the Vermont staff who have been here, both Bob Paquin and Martin Walsh, who worked with them to get this set up. I especially want to thank the witnesses.

Friday, in the summer in New England, everybody wants to go off and go somewhere else. We have such short summers here. A lot of people have come here today. I really appreciate that. In closing, I would like to note what I have said before. The Northeast does have different interests. It is hard to draw a program, a national program for soil and water conservation, that is going to be able to lay down the same standards across the country. It just does not work.

Our problems of topsoil are so different from many of the other parts of the country. That does not mean you cannot write such a program. It simply means that you recognize the regional differences. The goal is always the same, of course, to protect what is really the lifeblood of our country: The soil that helps keep feeding us. We have to approach it in different ways in different parts of the country.

Mr. Chairman, I commend you, as I did in the opening statement, for your strong support in not only helping to pass the laws to make that possible, but also helping to get the funding, too. I yield.

Senator JEPSEN. In closing I would like to thank everyone again for coming today. Many of the concerns I have heard echo my feelings and those of us in Congress who are trying to keep these issues in the forefront of the congressional debate on soil conservation policy.

I would especially like to thank Senator Leahy for sponsoring these hearings in Vermont and for accommodating his New England neighbors.

I would just remind all of our fellow citizens, city cousins, there is an old saying that if you take away our cities, but keep our farms, we will rebuild our cities. But, if you take away our farms, the grass is going to grow in the streets of the cities.

Senator Leahy, I know that I can depend on you to continue the bipartisan relationship you and I and the other Senators share. Keeping soil and water conservation at the forefront of this Nation's natural resource agenda is critically important and transcends party lines.

We in Congress worked closely to incorporate resource conservation provisions in the 1981 farm law; that diligence remains today. The Senate is actively engaged in overseeing the progress of our previous legislative efforts. It is working pragmatically, and thoughtfully, to assemble information and ideas. And, I might add, to find solutions that will set a new direction for conservation policy in the immediate future and for the long-term as we prepare for the 1985 farm bill. These efforts are expected to set the direction for conservation policy through this decade.

This is the first time that many of us in Congress, and on the Agriculture Committee, have collectively engaged in such long-term preparation and planning.

I hope that this signals a permanent change in our approach to legislation and that it will permit the Senate to once again become a forum in which we can debate and consider all ideas in a thoughtful and rational manner.

Senator Leahy, I know we will work together to continue the RCA process. The oversight of this process and the proposed national conservation program that we are considering today indicates that Congress is committed to reassessing the Federal role in on-farm conservation assistance.

The Department of Agriculture has had 5 years in which to assess the soil and water needs of this Nation. In my opinion, they worked hard, but the consensus from many of you is that the job is not complete. Problems are pointed out. Solutions are alluded to. However, much remains open to question and does not respond to what Congress intended or what you as farmers, conservationists, and resource users want.

We are going to shift some responsibility back to you at the State level, but we cannot and will not abandon you, financially or otherwise.

The changing emphasis of soil conservation policy from a nationally controlled program to a locally controlled program should be coupled with a renewed national commitment to managing our soil and water resources wisely.

We need to reinforce the local administration of conservation programs, but we need to carefully avoid actions that would impede the long-range goals of the overall national effort.

The subcommittee will hold the final in this series of hearings on June 28, 1983, in Washington, D.C. We will listen to the views of the farm organizations and conservation group leaders. Following this, the subcommittee will issue a report and analysis of the situation.

Based on this analysis, Congress will take further action as needed, and, hopefully, so will the administration.

I thank you again for coming, and I declare this meeting adjourned.

[Whereupon, the subcommittee recessed, to reconvene at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, June 28, 1983, in room 328-A, Russell Senate Office Building.]

REGIONAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEEDS

TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 1983

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION,
FORESTRY, AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:40 a.m., in room SR 328-A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger W. Jepsen, (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Jepsen.

Also present: Senators Zorinsky and Dixon.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER W. JEPSEN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator JEPSEN. Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone here today on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry, and Environment. This is the last in a series of six hearings on the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 and the proposed national conservation program.

The objective of the hearings has been to consider the views of the administration and the American public on the priorities and directions set within the program document. If the Congress accepts this proposal, the framework provided by the USDA will be used to guide the direction of soil and water conservation programs through the remainder of the decade.

Soil erosion is one of the most serious resource conservation problems facing the Nation today. The preservation of the productive resource base of this Nation—that is, our agricultural lands—is a national priority for both the present generation and for future generations.

Based on the testimony I have listened to around the country, it is clear that the central objective of any national food and agriculture policy cannot be solely to produce maximum yields for maximum profit, but to insure the long-term stabilization of the agricultural economy, in concert with its environment.

The subcommittee has held four hearings around the country to discuss regional conservation priorities and needs. The hearings focused on the national program and the impact it would have on the regional resource bases.

In Mississippi, witnesses focused primarily on the cropland soil erosion rate. The related loss in productivity and income to Mississippi farmers caused by severe erosion is at a cost of about $1 billion a year. However, concern was not limited to topsoil losses from croplands. Mississippi residents were also alarmed over the high-erosion rates caused by construction, urban development, and other nonagricultural uses of land which contribute an additional 30 million tons of soil loss annually.

I would point out, Senator Dixon, that they did thank me profusely, and they would have you too if you had been there, for all that topsoil that they get down there from Illinois and Iowa that comes down the river.

Reflected in the statements from the residents of Kentucky, testimony focused not only on these nonagricultural soil losses, but also on the overall conversion of agricultural land to nonfarm uses. Continued conversions of land could severely impact the region's marketing, distribution, and food supply.

Equally disturbing was the administration's directive to return more of the responsibility in designing and implementing a national soil and water conservation program to the State and local governments. Although this intent is credible, many of these Government representatives stated that their agencies simply did not have the resources at this time to assume this responsibility and focus on this national problem.

Moreover, the comment was made that it was the responsibility of the Federal Government to provide State and local conservation programs with the technical and financial resources to accomplish local conservation goals and objectives.

In my home State of Iowa, many spoke of a concern over the steady loss of topsoil from some of this Nation's most productive agricultural land. Iowans expressed a continued appreciation for their natural heritage. The State legislature has enacted State laws and programs which have been developed that continue to complement the Federal conservation effort.

However, we in Congress cannot continue to propose programs, set national goals and standards, have the State governments work to implement them, and then underfund these basic efforts.

Although funding for the conservation technical assistance program has increased for fiscal year 1984, funding for the majority of the other conservation programs remains considerably below levels that would assist many potential conservation users.

I might add this desire to reduce funding for conservation programs is not unique with this administration or with preceding administrations. It seems apparent that good land stewardship and an awareness of exactly how this prime resource contributes to a healthy agriculture and the U.S. economy is not appreciated in the Federal bureaucracy.

The fourth field hearing was held this past Friday in Vermont. I listened to what New England, as a region, feels about the proposed program. Many New Englanders could appreciate the concerns of the Southern and Western farmers over soil losses. However, they stressed that other regions of the country had a considerably deeper soil base. Soils of the New England area are thin. The slightest erosion may severely impact the region's potential future productivity.

Across the country there was near unanimity in the assessment of the proposed targeting program. Many agreed that a national program should focus on areas with the most severe conservation problems.

In fact, it was strongly, almost solidly, unanimous that the targeting assistance to an area which has critical erosion problems is a prudent use of limited resources. However, it was repeatedly stressed that other areas with limited conservation problems would be short shrifted. It seems that if targeting is to be followed as a method for reducing critical erosion problems, then clearly additional appropriations should be provided to fund the concept.

I think the most interesting and promising information to be gleaned from these hearings is the growing nationwide consensus among farm leaders, conservationists, State and local officials, and others that the integration of long-term soil and water conservation needs is essential to a comprehensive domestic and international food and agriculture policy.

Most, when asked, feel that voluntary participation in conservation programs may no longer be a luxury this Nation can afford. We are investing public dollars and the public trust in our efforts to preserve the resource base for future productive uses and to renew the long-term prosperity of the agriculture economy.

Thus, many feel that the Federal Government should not spend money on farm price and income support programs without requiring some type of conservation practice or system in return.

The State and local commitment is there. The congressional commitment is continually present. The Federal Government must listen to the public and to those of us who represent them in Congress, and commit national financial resources as well. There are no simplistic answers for the problems before us, but solutions are available.

At this time I would like to thank my colleagues, Senators Cochran, Huddleston, and Leahy, for sponsoring hearings in their respective States. It is only through a concerted bipartisan effort that we will be able to work toward solutions which benefit us all.

Additionally, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the distinguished chairman of the full committee, Senator Helms, for his support of agricultural conservation issues. His efforts have allowed the Senate for the first time in several years to examine conservation issues from a national perspective.

It is this perspective upon which a national program should be based, and it is only from this perspective that we as policymakers can demonstrate our responsiveness to our constituencies and to the higher principles which determine the goals that we as a nation set and which we as a Congress strive to achieve.

This morning, we have our final hearing on oversight of the Soil and Water Resource Conservation Act. We have five witnesses scheduled, and at this time I would yield to my very distinguished colleague from Illinois, Senator Dixon, who would introduce our first witness.

Now, Senator, you have the floor.

STATEMENT OF HON. ALAN J. DIXON, A U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS

Senator **DIXON**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you know, the 1981 farm bill established the Farmland Protection Policy Act. The Congress recognized as a priority the need to avoid losses of prime farmland caused by the actions of the Federal Government.

The act requires the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with other Federal agencies, to develop criteria for identifying the effects of Federal programs on the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The criteria will then be used to identify Federal programs that could be modified to stem the loss of prime farmland. These efforts will complement those already ongoing at the State and local government level.

As of this date, the Department has not implemented the act. The effective date of the act was June 1982. Mr. Chairman, I know that you share my feeling that the Nation's agricultural lands are vital to the continued preeminence of U.S. agriculture, to the overall health of our economy, and to the strength of our balance-of-payments position.

I would like to introduce to the committee the Illinois Director of Agriculture, Larry Werries. As director, Mr. Werries has been instrumental in implementing the Illinois Farmland Preservation Act. He is responsible for working with State agencies in implementing this policy.

This policy requires that certain State agencies do not needlessly contribute to the irreversible conversion of Illinois farmland, and that the State agencies prepare policy statements on farmland preservation. The department reviews projects to make certain that State agencies are complying with the act.

I believe that Director Werries will give the committee valuable insight into the importance of this type of policy and how this type of policy works.

Mr. Chairman, just as I enthusiastically presented to you on an earlier occasion a couple of years ago my friend, Jack Block, who has become the distinguished Secretary of Agriculture in this country, I present to you my friend and a distinguished Illinoisan, Larry Werries, to give you his point of view on this subject. I thank the Chair.

Senator **JEPSEN**. Well, if you set a precedent, then maybe Larry can look forward to being Secretary of Agriculture some time in the future.

Larry Werries, welcome, and thank you, Senator Dixon. I know that you have a Small Business subcommittee hearing to attend. We have a statement from Senator Huddleston that he requests to be inserted in the record.[1]

The Chair would advise the witnesses this morning that all of your written statements will be entered into the record as if read. So, at your option, you may proceed in any manner you so desire.

Welcome, Mr. Director, and you may proceed.

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[1] See p. 416 for the prepared statement of Senator Huddleston.

STATEMENT OF LARRY WERRIES, DIRECTOR, STATE OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ACCOMPANIED BY RON DARDEN, STAFF MEMBER

Mr. **Werries**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.[1] For more than 2 years, the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses has been a hotly debated public issue. Actually, there are two types of farmland conversion.

One type, private transactions among willing sellers and buyers of land, is emphatically not within the purview of State and Federal central governments. The second type of farmland conversion is the acquisition of farmland by governments, either by purchase or through the exercise of the power of eminent domain.

Typically, Government agencies acquire land for a variety of public purposes—highways, parks, airports, flood control, for example. Government agencies also issue permits and licenses to use farmland for such things as solid waste landfills and electric power generation. While these public works are necessary, and while they provide indispensable public benefits, their improper design and location can cause or lead to additional unnecessary farmland conversion.

Because they have shown no propensity to do so on their own, central government agencies should be required to design and to locate projects that take an absolute minimum of farmland and that encourage the least amount of additional land use change. Whenever possible, existing public facilities should be renovated, not replaced. New facilities should be designed to be sufficient, not to include unnecessary or excess capacity. Nonfarm development proposals should identify sites as close as possible to existing nonfarm development.

Without such restrictions, Government agencies become active participants in land markets. Their actions arbitrarily influence property values and the desires and opportunities of private landowners. In the case of farmland, Government's regulation of itself is the only way to protect the right of citizens to enjoy their private property.

Included in the information for you is a detailed account of the farmland protection program in Illinois. It is a reasonable approach to the problem and one which I feel will work just as well at the Federal level.

As we all know, the National Farmland Protection Policy Act was passed in December 1981 as part of the 1981 Food and Agricultural Act. The act designated USDA as the implementing Department. The Secretary delegated the authority to the Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, who in turn designated the Soil Conservation Service as the agency responsible for implementation.

The act was to have become effective 6 months after becoming law. However, it has been 18 months since the act was passed and it has not been implemented. This gives us cause to ask why.

All we know is that SCS has written several drafts of rules and regulations for implementing the act. It is our opinion that SCS has earnestly endeavored to implement the act in accordance with the intent of Congress. There appears to be an obstacle somewhere, and I submit that the U.S. Congress has the ability to identify that obstruction and to remove it.

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[1] See p. 417 for the prepared statement of Mr. Werries; additional material has been retained in committees files.

The National Farmland Protection Policy Act in no way infringes upon private landowners' property rights. The act is designed to insure that Federal Government development projects do not needlessly convert farmlands. As in Illinois, this is an effort by Government to regulate itself. It is a recognition that farmland and agriculture are important to the Nation's economy.

We are dealing with two important resources: farmland and tax revenues. As elected officials and appointed officials, it is incumbent upon us to use both resources wisely.

In closing, I would like to say that States such as Illinois should be supported by Federal authorities in their effort to protect farmland. This is an effort which requires cooperation at all levels of government, with major decisions resting at the lowest level possible.

It is important that Federal agencies regulate their activities to insure that local programs to protect farmland are not negated by actions of the Federal Government. Billions of additional tax dollars and millions of acres of private property can be saved in the immediate future if the Federal bureaucracy is required to support Illinois' and other States' efforts to protect their land.

This can be accomplished with administrative rules and regulations as required under the National Farmland Protection Policy Act, which prohibit the proposal or evaluation of projects that consume too much farmland.

Consequently, we call for the Federal Government to become a partner in the effort to protect farmland at the State and local level. It should be a full partner, not just a silent partner. The National Farmland Protection Policy Act is the avenue to full partnership, and the act should be implemented without further delay.

Mr. Chairman, I have with me Ron Darden, who is the lead person in the Illinois Department of Agriculture in implementing the policy as established in Illinois. First, it was an Executive order and then later it has become legislation in the State, and we feel like it is a good policy and it has placed us in a position of leadership at the State level.

Senator **Jepsen**. What is the policy? How does it work in Illinois?

Mr. **Werries**. In essence, the Department of Agriculture is the lead agency, and as nine other State developmental agencies contemplate the usage, or permitting usage, of Illinois farmland, we are given the opportunity to review that proposal and make assessments based upon the relative value or loss to the agricultural community of that farmland.

Examples would be the Department of Transportation, the Department of Conservation, Mines and Minerals, EPA. There are nine agencies in all, and it places State government in a position of being a good example. As we contemplate the usage of Illinois farmland in development projects, we are not indiscriminately using just whatever land might be readily available.

Senator **Jepsen**. So I am gathering it is a policy that is directed toward all State operations, and in the conduct of State business you will set an example by way of your approach to making sure you do not put a diagonal highway across prime farmland. Is that an example?

Mr. **Werries**. That is essentially it, Senator. We do not feel like it is the State or Federal Government's position to become involved in private transactions between property owners. But, nevertheless, I believe it is essential for governments to regulate themselves as they use land, because we use quite a bit of it.

In Illinois we have established that we lose 100,000 acres of farmland to conversion every year, or at least that has been the history for the last 15 or 20 years. State government uses about 15,000 of that each year, so if we can set a good example and reduce that amount of prime farmland lost, we think we are doing our work.

Senator **Jepsen**. You know, it was kind of interesting, as we moved around the country, from the South to the Midcentral area and Kentucky, and then into the Midwest and Iowa, and then zipped up into New England, the differences in priorities that people and agencies had in this conservation area.

I can say with no reservation whatsoever that the priority in New England was just what we are talking about, and that is this exodus of prime farmland. And their policy is quite different because of that priority. The policy that you have in Illinois is limited to Government operations. They have policies and statutes in their States that look at, evaluate—and then the procedures and the money to do it, to buy up the developmental rights of certain lands to make sure they stay.

Mr. **Werries**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. And that is an approach that goes quite a bit further than your farmland policy in Illinois. Did you indicate that you felt that going this far was something that you should not get into—this private arena?

I am trying to bring out something, because I think I understand how you feel and I feel kind of the same way. And I was quite surprised, but as time went on I grew to understand very quickly because, without exception, all the New England States had that.

I do not recall now whether it was New Jersey, specifically, for example, that not only has it, but they recently had a bond issue to provide the money to buy up this land. That bond issue passed with recordbreaking percentages. So, when you are running out of time and you are running out of land and it gets down to where the rubber hits the road, folks really start putting in policies that we say in the Midwest we would never tolerate. It is interesting.

Mr. **Werries**. It is. I think Massachusetts has a similar policy of purchasing developmental rights.

Senator **Jepsen**. You bet; they all do. Well, it is very interesting.

I would like to recognize my distinguished colleague from Nebraska, Senator Zorinsky, and my good friend, for any statement he may wish to make or questions he would ask.

Senator **Zorinsky**. Well, I have no statement, Mr. Chairman, other than to compliment you on taking the time to have some hearings and get input on what I consider a very important issue. Certainly, I think there is no question that every time we export a bushel of grain, we are exporting some of our soil right along with it.

I think that some of the input received by this subcommittee in the area of soil conservation now will have the ability to preserve for future generations the ability to maintain agriculture as we know it in the Midwest.

I would just like to compliment the gentleman from Illinois on his presentation. I think quite obviously a lot of thought has been given and is being given to soil conservation in your State.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Senator.

Larry, in your opinion, as the director now of agriculture in Illinois, should the Federal commodity support programs be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Mr. **Werries**. I would not oppose cross-compliance. As you know, in the Midwest traditionally the conservative elements out there have been against that. But I think the issue has become of a critical enough nature, both from the soil erosion standpoint and from the conversion standpoint that a significant element of midwesterners would support such a cross-compliance.

Senator **Jepsen**. And do you personally support it?

Mr. **Werries**. Yes, I would support it.

Senator **Jepsen**. What sort of incentive do you think would lead you to apply conservation practices on land that you may have or might have?

Mr. **Werries**. On our own farm, we have a pretty good history of applying conservation practices. Perhaps you are aware that on our farm in west central Illinois, we hosted a statewide conservation tillage demonstration last October 20, and the President chose to visit that, so it got a lot of national recognition.

I would not oppose a differential, for example, in the loan or target rates for farms which have conservation plans as opposed to those which do not. I think it is a critical point, and even though we seem to be in a position of excess production and the antithesis would say, why not let the supply and demand forces apply both in commodities and also in the buying and selling of farmland, that tends to be the shortsighted view, I think.

As we cover farmland with shopping centers or airports or highways, it is very difficult to retrieve. Sometime down the road, our children and grandchildren are going to wonder why someone did not implement wiser land use policies or conservation policies.

Senator **Jepsen**. You say a differential in target prices, maybe, and in commodity programs as a sort of inducement——

Mr. **Werries**. I do not think it would be beyond the nature of midwesterners to accept such a thing. Two or three years ago, I do not think that would have been broadly accepted in the Midwest, but I believe there is more of a concern for it now.

Senator **Jepsen**. I can personally attest to that. I have asked this question since 1979, and indeed the feeling has changed. Some say that any type of Government aid that goes to farmers, such as your Farmers Home mortgage, should have some form of cross-compliance to the extent of conservation plans and procedures, and so on. Are you in favor of that?

Mr. **Werries**. Yes, I would support that. Farmers Home loans tend to be made to farmers, for the most part, who have exhausted other credit resources. So if we are talking about tax incentives or credit incentives for farmers in that category, the impact is lessened because sometimes farmers have very low incomes who participate in these Farmers Home programs, so the impact is lessened somewhat.

I think it should be in the general commodity programs where the cross-compliance would appear.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you. I do not have any more questions. Senator, do you?

Senator **Zorinsky**. No.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you have any statement or anything you want by way of closing, Mr. Director?

Mr. **Werries**. We feel like we have a workable policy in Illinois. It was put into legislation in the 82d general assembly a year ago; it was signed by the Governor. It is not a zero-growth policy; it is a planned growth policy and it has created, to my knowledge, no adverse effects. It simply puts State government in a good position to set the example for the conversion of land in Illinois.

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you very kindly, Larry Werries, director, State of Illinois Department of Agriculture. Come back and visit us again soon.

Mr. **Werries**. Thank you. I will see you in Des Moines.

Senator **Jepsen**. OK, good. Keep up the good work.

I would now like to introduce Mr. Clarence Durban, vice president, National Association of Conservation Districts, from the great State of Ohio.

Welcome to Washington. As I indicated to you before we officially opened the meeting, I was most impressed with the contingent delegation and representation of Ohio folks at the Louisville, Ky. hearing. I was closing my eyes and wondering whether I was in Ohio or Kentucky because there were as many people from Ohio there as there were from any of the other States.

Welcome to the Senate Agriculture Committee, and we look forward to hearing your remarks. As I indicated before, your written testimony will be entered into the record as if read and you may proceed in any manner you so desire.

STATEMENT OF CLARENCE DURBAN, VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. **Durban**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here today to testify before this committee.[1] I am a grain farmer from central Ohio, vice president of the National Association of Conservation Districts, and a district supervisor in my own soil and water conservation district, and have been for some number of years.

We are pleased for the opportunity to comment. I will deviate considerably from the written testimony that has been turned in, in the interests of time for your committee. And if I dally toc long, I am sure you will let me know, and I appreciate that.

As you know, conservation districts have played a vital role in the RCA process. That was a long, frustrating, and sometimes very difficult process. But it has also been a rewarding one, and as a result of it, I believe we have stronger soil and water conservation programs across this Nation.

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[1] See p. 419 for the prepared statement of Mr. Durban.

I believe that the facts gathered by the Soil Conservation Service in that RCA study demonstrated a thing that perhaps district officials already knew, and that was that agriculture has changed in the last number of years considerably, both technically and economically. We have found that soil conservation systems that we used a number of years ago are not applicable today and they do not fit the situation that we now have.

I think the response to that problem has been widespread, and in many cases we, as individual farmers, have taken the initiative to do something about it and to initiate or institute a new way of using the land, of tilling the land. We have had a lot of support from land-grant universities, experiment stations, extension service, the EPA, and the USDA.

The changes we have made have been significant. That is not to say that we are anywhere near finished with the job. But we do have a lot of those techniques, as I mentioned. None of them are the final answer; we are aware of that. We need more answers.

The growing interest in those systems indicates to me and to the National Association of Conservation Districts that farmers are more than willing to adopt a new procedure or a new practice if it can be proven to them to be effective and feasible, both economically and in the possibility of saving some soil from erosion.

I believe that the final RCA program was a creative and innovative way to find those kinds of methods that we need to help those conservation programs to be as effective as possible, and that under a reduced funding level that we have been faced with for a number of years.

Once it became clear to us that the RCA program I referred to would be required to meet the budget limits imposed by OMB rather than the needs of America's lands, as was identified in that RCA appraisal, there was little that USDA could do but mimimize the damage that might otherwise occur to the Federal conservation effort.

We in conservation districts were disappointed with that outcome, as were most people involved in soil and water conservation programs. But I guess the question now is: "Where do we go from here?" We would like to offer some observations that we hope will be of some help.

First, we encourage Congress to provide ample oversight so that the 1982 national resource inventories currently in the final stages of checking will be thoroughly analyzed and publicized both within USDA and in outside organizations.

Next, we need to keep this information flowing in the future. We support legislation to extend the RCA process so that periodic repeats of this NRI might be carried out; every 5 years is the suggestion.

We also suggest that the interpretive analysis of that inventory be made public within a year after that resource data has been finalized.

One of the more controversial aspects of that RCA study was the degree to which USDA studied the Federal priorities and programs, and characterized the whole soil conservation effort as a "from the top down, federally oriented or directed effort."

We believe that the history of the soil conservation movement indicates that the reverse has largely been the case. Much of the strength and the success of the soil conservation programs in this country has been their local and State orientation.

One of the products of this "top-down" approach has been a strong focus on targeting USDA assistance to areas where soil erosion is the worst. If carried too far or on too simple a basis, we have some concerns with that approach.

For example, the majority of the soils in the Midwestern States upon which intensive corn and soybean production occurs do not have excessive soil erosion problems. Yet, the top soil layer is thin, and soil erosion, even at modest rates, can deplete soil productivity steadily over a period of time.

These soils, which are the key to our national future, are prime targets for cost-effective conservation.

As USDA attempts to make its limited funds go further and accomplish more—a policy that we most certainly support—we feel they have to pay more attention to State and local priorities that have been established. We feel this could add to the fine tuning that they will lack if they continue to focus simply on a few federally defined priorities.

I think the evidence is strong that the soil and water conservation program is steadily becoming more cooperative in nature. Many States, as you have indicated, are becoming involved with soil conservation programs within the States. State funding has been made available as the Federal funds for conservation programs have been diminishing or as inflation has eaten up those funds. State and local governments have been filling that gap.

We believe that State and local funding for conservation district operations and technical assistance has risen dramatically in recent years. There are a number of States that have programs where State funds help offset the loss of Soil Conservation Service personnel in those States, and the loss of that service personnel has damaged the program effects in recent years.

The matching grants program that was authorized in the 1981 farm bill was designed to assist in that partnership, but it has not been funded. NACD strongly supports the funding of the grants program as a way to continue to build support from the State and local level.

We believe that USDA should aggressively move to be ready to implement all the conservation programs authorized in the 1981 farm bill. This would include those grants to States and conservation districts, the special areas conservation program, the conservation loan program, and the farmland protection policy.

USDA should do everything within its administrative authority to remove all Federal incentives that tend to underwrite the cultivation of marginal lands. The clear legislative direction on this issue is contained in S. 663, which we encourage Congress to enact at the earliest possible time.

In addition, USDA should bring proposals to Congress that will create a voluntary, certified set-aside program so that farmers who wish to seed down parts of their cropland to grass, legumes or trees could do so without exposing themselves to the risk that their cropland base would later be adversely affected or that they would have to set aside additional lands in order to meet mandatory set-aside programs.

We believe that we should create a permanent approach to commodity program administration that would let a farmer establish his base acres on the basis of his normal crop rotation, then keep that base established through reporting of actual crop acres and participation in the voluntary set-aside even in years when there was no mandatory diversion or set-aside program in effect.

Once these programs have been altered so that voluntary conservation farmers are no longer economically penalized by the effects of the commodity programs, USDA should require participants in the USDA income support programs to manage their land under conservation standards acceptable to local conservation districts.

We should enable the Secretary to enter into long-term agreements with farmers to set aside highly erodible lands in a paid set-aside that would convert those lands to grass or trees and would keep them in that use for many years.

We believe that we should create a set of tax incentives for farmers, including investment tax credit and a "green ticket" tax bonus incentive for farmers who are willing to establish and maintain a system on their land that meets an annual certification requirement established by a conservation district.

We believe we should create a special fund for Federal soil and water conservation activities that would receive up to one-half of the revenues currently accruing to the Federal Government from the leasing of offshore Federal oil and gas lands. In this way, the Federal legacy of nonrenewable mineral and energy resources could, in its declining decades, help prepare us for centuries of dependence on our agricultural productivity.

We believe we should establish a general national policy goal of achieving a profitable commercial agriculture, using agricultural and production technologies that result in little or no net degradation or permanent damage to soil and water resources.

We believe we should establish strategies that will allow USDA conservation programs to actively contribute toward implementing the non-point-source pollution control plans developed by conservation districts and others over the last decade.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, this is an ambitious agenda; we know that. We think that the protection of the vital resource base that underlies and supports America's most basic industry is a serious enough matter to merit such national attention.

You can be assured that our organization will actively aid you in reaching toward these objectives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mr. Durban, I commend you for the obvious preparation, research and forthrightness of not only being a critic and an analyst, but also a total picture problem solver with recommended solutions and recommended sources. This creativity, evidenced by your report, is, I hope, a sign of things to come as we develop our program here.

It was most refreshing to hear the direct recommendations, and specific ones, that you have made. You mentioned something that has been woven through the fabric of all of our testimony time and time again, and that is you talked about long term, long range planning, stability and sustainability, and somehow rewarding those farmers who year in and year out over the years have indeed practiced soil conservation, and have done it without Federal urging. They have done it out of their own bank accounts because of their care and concern for the soil.

What part does the minimum till, no till play, do you believe, in the future of soil conservation in this country?

Mr. **Durban**. I think it is one of the very vital programs, Mr. Chairman, that needs to be explored to its greatest possibilities. It is probably one of the most least costly and most effective soil conservation techniques that we have had in many years that a farmer can use simply by a change of equipment, which is not cheap, but neither is building a sod waterway or establishing many of those other construction practices that we have to do that conservation tillage will help us, to a large degree, to control.

With the residues that we leave on top, there is a tremendous difference, as farmers are finding out across this Nation. The conservation districts across the Nation, industry people, and many others—have established the conservation tillage information center to assist in getting that message out to farmers.

To me, that is one of the prime responsibilities we all have—finding a way to get more people to try that method. It goes against the grain, so to speak, of an old farmer who has clean tilled for years and years to plant corn in a field that has a bunch of cornstalks sticking up from last year.

It is an educational process, but it is very vital; it is one that can have tremendous success in the soil conservation program.

Senator **Jepsen**. Would you please elaborate more on—you mentioned the permanent approach to land conservation and those who willingly and of their own volition participate and yet get caught in a Catch-22 situation sometimes because they are actually penalized when it comes to talking about land base for set-aside, targeting, and so on, if they desire to participate.

Mr. **Durban**. If a farmer has been following a rotation system, for instance, and has a hay crop on his farm, that hay crop is not considered as part of his production acres. Therefore, he cannot count that as crop acres when he gets a crop base. He has to set aside, in addition to that hay land, other land in the set-aside program.

He therefore is penalized, as opposed to the individual who has farmed from fence to fence for years and years with corn and soybeans and wheat. They have a broad base of acres for their grain crops, and therefore have a greater benefit coming from a Federal program that comes about to a large degree because of the tillage of some of the marginal lands we have in the country that perhaps never should have been taken from grass in the first place.

We are not experiencing that in our part of the country so much as in the farther western regions of this Nation, but it is a definite problem.

Senator **Jepsen**. Senator Zorinsky?

Senator **Zorinsky**. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to compliment you on your presentation. I would like to ask you—you know, we are always talking about incentives from Government or tie-ins with farm programs to give incentives to farmers in soil conservation practices.

Is there any merit in the establishment of a grading system for soil that would benefit the farmer economically just by the fact that land value would be able to be used as assets and as collateral in loans from banks, with regard to a grading system of land that has been protected and taken care of in land conservation programs accruing economically to the benefit of the owner of that land for his own financial benefit?

There should be, I feel, a system for a farmer not to say, "Now, does it benefit me to take care of this land because the Government is going to require some action from me but rather is this soil conservation effort for my own self-interest or economic gain."

Or when land is sold, is it just bottom land or irrigated land or center pivot, and that dictates what land is worth? I think there could be a differential there.

Mr. DURBAN. Yes. I think, Senator and Mr. Chairman, today that concept is not used in the purchase of land, or perhaps in the borrowing of money, to the extent that it probably will be in the years to come.

I think as we look at the successes in space and those kinds of technical accomplishments, we are going to see that kind of technical expertise applied to soil surveys and those kinds of issues.

But I think to a greater degree, if the tax incentives that we speak of could be initiated, whereby an individual who has been doing a good job with his farm as soil types indicate, which has to do with the terrain, to a large degree, then I believe that particular aspect would have a more widespread effect and a more widespread acceptance and use perhaps than the use of soil surveys insofar as credit ratings and those kinds of issues are concerned.

The tax thing, to me individually, and I believe to those people that I work very closely with at the National Association of Conservation Districts, would be a very vital and very welcomed issue that we could use to the tenth degree.

Senator ZORINSKY. Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Senator.

One last question, Mr. Durban: In your opinion, should the Federal commodity support programs be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Mr. DURBAN. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am not so sure that I would like to use the word "require." I would like to see the individual who does a good job of conservation on his land have the opportunity to participate in those programs. That individual that does not, if he chooses not to do it, then he should not be eligible for those kinds of payments and those kinds of loans.

I think that maybe he has that choice, but I suspect that as farmers, you know, it happens so many times that we look across the fence. In many cases we should not do that because the guy across the fence may have a four-wheel drive tractor that we do not need, but we have got to have one because he has one.

Well, if we are doing a good job of conservation farming on that side of the fence and can participate in a program that assists with that particular type of farming, then I believe the fellow that is over here that is not doing that job and cannot participate is soon going to.

I think it can be done without saying that you are required to do it.

Senator **Jepsen**. What I hear you saying is, yes, you are going to require it, but you are going to do it in a nice way.

Mr. **Durban**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. They just cannot participate unless they do it.

Mr. **Durban**. That is right. I think it would be my choice, Senator.

Senator **Jepsen**. OK. What sort of incentive would lead you to apply conservation practices on your land? You have mentioned a tax incentive. I would point out that if you are going to have a tax incentive, you have got to have a profit or something to have a tax incentive on.

Mr. **Durban**. Yes, that is true, and I believe that in some cases there are farmers that are making some money.

Senator **Jepsen**. I think there are a lot of them.

Mr. **Durban**. Yes. Too many times, I think the management aspect is overlooked in some of those issues. A lot of those farmers are conservation farmers that are doing that. To me, that is the big one.

The other would be if an individual needs a waterway, he should have some benefit to him to put that waterway in. If he is putting in a waterway that maybe is going to benefit his neighbor more than it might that particular farmer himself, there is no way to recover the cost of that waterway. He cannot raise the price of his commodity because he has that, that protects that farmer down the road, or that protects the general public if that same waterway happens to go into a public stream.

Terraces in some parts of the country, which I am not all that familiar with—there are places that they are an absolute requirement, and I think they cannot be put in for the same reason. A farmer just cannot afford it; he cannot get his investment back on those terraces.

And then I think the big one would still be the one that does not penalize the individual that has some grass on a sloping field that he knows should not be plowed, but he has to plow it in order to take part in a program that perhaps keeps him in business.

Senator **Jepsen**. Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Durban. It is refreshing to hear not only, obviously, a professional in the field of farming and conservation—I can understand why you are vice president of the National Association of Conservation Districts. You kind of manifest what I think Will Rogers meant when he said the further away he got from Washington, the more hope he had for the country. Your commonsense approach to things is delightful.

Mr. **Durban**. Thank you.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you very much for coming.

I would now introduce Robert Gray and Norm Berg, neither of whom needs any introduction to this group. If there are two giants in this country in the area of conservation in all phases, it is certainly this combination and I cannot add any more than that.

So, I look forward to your testimony. As you both know, being veterans many times over of hearings, your testimony will be entered in the record as if read and you may proceed in any order and any manner that you so desire.

STATEMENT OF NORMAN A. BERG, SENIOR ADVISOR AND ROBERT J. GRAY, DIRECTOR OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT, AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

Mr. **Berg.** Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, Bob and I will share the platform here this morning.[1] We appreciate the opportunity, of course, to discuss soil and water conservation and to add to the record that you have obtained from your four excellent field hearings held recently. We have heard reports, too, of the value of those hearings; also, the hearings that were held before the Joint Economic Committee just a week ago that dealt for a full morning with the agricultural resource conservation needs of the country.

The American Farmland Trust, as a private, nonprofit organization, is dedicated, along with many others, to finding ways to conserve our Nation's top soil, and also to protect the prime agricultural land from conversion to nonagricultural uses. We were very pleased to hear the director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture that their actions in that State are concerned with the early implementation of the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Our efforts in the Farmland Trust include initiatives and activities in both the private and public sector. The majority of our projects involve work directly with individual landowners and State and local officials.

In less than 3 years, the AFT has now a membership of about 25,000 individuals from all parts of the country. As you know, Mr. Chairman, this past year the Farmland Trust has undertaken an extensive, in-depth analysis of soil conservation problems and programs. We believe our conservation project is one of the most detailed analyses of conservation programs that has been undertaken by the private sector.

We also had the very valuable assistance of two dozen steering committee members, and Clarence Durban was a member of that steering committee. We appreciate the service of these people throughout the country, who represented national organizations and, for the most part, were farmers in their own right.

The basic goals, as we designed and carried out the soil conservation study, were to evaluate the effectiveness of the traditional cost sharing and technical assistance programs that have been in place for reducing soil erosion to a tolerable level; analyzing the various voluntary incentives that have been in place for implementing soil conservation practices, and what have been the results of that history; investigate the current use and prospective uses, specifying goals or methods of soil erosion control, including regulatory or cross-compliance provisions; interviewing farmers in diverse areas experiencing serious soil loss to determine the response of both the farm operators and the absentee landowners to their current soil conservation problems, and to test their reaction to possible new initiatives; and to develop policy recommendations for submission to Congress, to State governments, and others in positions of authority and responsibility.

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[1] See p. 422 for the prepared statement of Mr. Berg and Mr. Gray.

We recognized in this process that the farmers are not one single undifferentiated mass out here in this country; that the public is at a teachable moment in terms of the soil and water conservation issues. And we do not agree with the philosophy that if it is not broke, do not fix it. I think we have got some problems here that need to be addressed.

We are pleased, Mr. Chairman, to report that at this time we are nearly finished with the project and will be releasing the findings and recommendations very soon. These will be published and available widely.

Because of the importance of the hearing this morning, we thought it would be most appropriate to share with you and your committee a number of the more important findings and some of the recommendations that will be more thoroughly discussed in the project's full report.

Specifically, we would like to discuss two facets of our project that we believe will be of particular interest to the committee: first, to present some of the results of the extensive field interviews conducted with nearly 700 farmers and ranchers in six important agricultural States, and then Mr. Gray will cover the policy recommendations that we are bringing here this morning that we believe show promise and are necessary if the Nation's public conservation programs are to become more cost effective and responsive to contemporary conservation needs.

Let me go directly to our most encouraging conclusion. We strongly believe that soil loss can and should be reduced significantly to, or even below, acceptable levels on the vast majority of agricultural land now experiencing excessive soil erosion losses.

Further, the American Farmland Trust believes that this achievement can be attained in a relatively short time, with relatively modest additional costs for the conservation programs, if the basic thrust behind our policy recommendations are incorporated one way or another into more contemporary conservation programs and policies.

There are no bold, new initiatives or program changes behind this conclusion. Our confidence rests in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's growing ability to identify conservation needs at all levels and our hope that a much more systematic, and therefore effective, approach to the administration of our public conservation programs will be adopted by the Department of Agriculture.

We put great faith in the authority given to the Department of Agriculture in the RCA authority of Public Law 95-192 in terms of the appraisal capability that the Department now has, and we will see some results of that from the soon to be released 1982 national resources inventory.

Returning now to the findings of the survey, we would like to focus on what farmers and ranchers told us they are doing, what they think about soil and water conservation.

As we say, we interviewed nearly 700 farmers and ranchers in six study areas. The background information on these areas is presented in table 1 of our testimony. Each interview, conducted by local people that we trained, took more than an hour; it was done on the farm.

The farm operators and owners were asked to assess the efforts of public agencies to help them control soil loss on agricultural land, to reveal what conservation practices they were using, and to describe how they felt about different public policies and programs that might be used to help them control their soil loss on their particular land use.

Our research design for the interviews involved a number of steps: first, the selection of specific agricultural areas; the selection within each area of study sites, usually corresponding to a watershed; third, enumerating, sampling and interviewing farmers in each study site; and, fourth, analyzing the collected data.

We built into our study as much diversity as possible in the land resources and the nature of agriculture found among the areas. All of the areas were characterized by high levels of soil loss.

To accomplish this objective, we met with SCS personnel and obtained the national resources inventory data on a number of counties located in the major land resource areas of the country. Additional data on the nature of the agriculture in each of the counties was obtained from the census of Agriculture, and we held a series of meetings with the local cooperative extension, SCS, and ASCS personnel in each of the prospective counties.

Six study sites were selected in five major land resource areas: Nixon Creek watershed in Haywood County, western Tennessee; Rattlesnake Creek watershed in Grant County, southwest Wisconsin; Coal Creek watershed, located between Warren and Marion Counties in Iowa; the Ora-Bradley watershed area in southern Illinois, Jackson County; portions of the Menfro soil association area of the Perry County, northeast Missouri country; and in eastern Colorado, the Cope Soil and Water Conservation District in Washington County.

Along with the selection of these six sites for the study, interviews were conducted with the representatives of public agricultural agencies and private farm organizations. The purpose of these interviews was to gage the form and extent of agency involvement in combating soil loss in that county, and with the farmers and ranchers that were chosen for the detailed interviews.

The farmowners and operators that we interviewed were engaged in a wide range of conservation practices. And, in our opinion, some of the more significant findings from the interviews involved the reasons given by the farmers for using a particular conservation practice.

We found, first, that the vast majority, 70 percent, explained that the major reason for their using a particular practice was the clear expectation that the practice would reduce their operating costs. This, I think, is favoring the reduced tillage mode that we hear about.

This finding contrasted sharply with the importance of farmers' expectations of receiving cost-share funds or technical assistance from any source, including the Federal Government. Only an average of 21 percent gave the availability of this type of assistance as the primary reason to adopt a certain conservation practice.

Second, once a conservation practice was in place, and if public funds had helped pay for it, an overwhelming proportion of the farmers, 71 percent, felt that the cost-share money should be repaid if the practice was not maintained.

Third, with the exception of only one county, there was strong support for Government payments to take highly erosive land out of intensive cultivation. This county in eastern Colorado was not in favor of this because they felt it should not have been taken out in the first place. They were very bitter about the fact that much of that good grassland had been plowed out, and they did not think that those people who had done that should be rewarded for having plowed it out.

We view this as a clear signal that many farmers have not only noticed but are concerned about the substantial acreage of marginal, highly erosive land that has been coming into cultivation in recent years.

Many farmers shared with us their fear that farming more and more poor land would be disastrous for the land, for grain markets, and for rural America in general.

Fourth, we also found overwhelming support for the targeting of technical assistance and cost-share funds. Over 83 percent of the farmers interviewed agreed that assistance should be concentrated in the areas of the country where soil loss problems are the most severe.

Surprisingly, there was strong support, 63 percent, for targeting, even if it meant less money and technical help for other areas.

Fifth, one of the key policy questions that we asked involved the issue of cross-compliance—a term that has been used in reference to literally dozens of policy ideas. We found that much of the negative response among farmers and operators to this term can be traced to misunderstanding of what is meant.

When we asked farmers directly how they felt about one of the most extreme forms of cross-compliance—and this was the question: "Farmers who grow crops on erosive land without conservation protection should not be eligible for participation in Government commodity price support programs or other assistance programs"—a clear majority of the farmers and operators in this survey supported this approach.

Obviously, there is a clearer understanding and more of a general acceptance of this particular policy question than heretofore recognized by many conservation policy leaders.

Sixth, in keeping with several programs, including the program in Iowa and State and local programs in other parts of the country, we also found strong support among the land users we interviewed for the ability of an individual to recover damages when their property has been harmed by soil that results in sediment eroding from land adjacent to their property. Offsite damages seem to be a very real, continuing concern to many farmers, along with other people in the country.

Seventh, and finally, on the policy side there continues to be an extremely high rate of support for continued Federal expenditures on soil and water conservation. In fact, the support for a continued

Federal role in the soil conservation program ran almost 75 percent.

Our interviews produced many other important findings that we will bring to the attention of the committee. In general, the farming operations that take advantage of available soil conservation programs tend to be larger in size than the average farm in the area. They tend to be operated by individuals who are older and the participating farms, in most cases, included livestock enterprises in their mix of farming operations.

We also found that farmers were basically well aware of their soil erosion problems, with a number of them reporting erosion on more than one-third of the acreage that they operated.

One of the more surprising findings that emerged from the interviews involved the amount of conservation work that is taking place on rented land. Although there was not a consistent trend in all six of the farming regions where the interviews were held, it was nonetheless clear that many farmers were using conservation practices on the land they rented, and many of them are renting several different parcels. We were surprised at how many different places they had to move their equipment to carry out their farming operations.

In the case of either reduced tillage or no till production systems, it is clear that most farmers find it more practical and rewarding to maintain and use one set of machinery for all of their cultivated land, whether they own or rent the land.

I would like to now turn the time over to Mr. Gray and his followup with the major recommendations.

Mr. **GRAY**. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to your committee this morning.

As I mentioned the other day in the Joint Economic Committee hearings, we have been working on a series of policy recommendations, culminating with this report that we will be releasing very soon.

Norm has pointed out the findings that we have uncovered in talking to 700 farmers. Of course, in addition to doing that work, which we thought was very important, to talk one-on-one with farmers in different parts of the country, we also completed a series of technical background papers by many experts on soil conservation issues around the country.

Of course, we have had good access to the SCS-USDA data. Both SCS and ASCS have been extremely cooperative in our efforts in analyzing the information that is around.

So, with all of that background, pulling all of that together in the last year, we think we have got a pretty good handle on what some of the problems are and to come forward with some solutions.

Now, we have built, obviously, on a lot of work that other people have been doing. The American Soybean Association has a survey out that is very good. They asked a lot of their people what they thought about soil conservation. Pioneer Hybrid has completed a rather extensive survey, and there has been a lot of other analytical work that we have drawn on.

We do not think that there is going to be one single program that is going to take care of all conservation needs and that conservation problems will totally disappear. What we think is that it is going to take a combination of programs meshed together in order to solve this problem.

What I would like to do in just the few minutes that I have allotted this morning is to touch quickly on some of the major recommendations that we are making. Actually, we are going to make about 60 different recommendations all the way across the board.

We have some guidelines that we think State and local governments could follow, if they choose to, in terms of some of the more desirable characteristics of State and local programs that we have seen in evaluating the programs that are currently in operation at the State and local level.

But I am going to talk mainly this morning, Mr. Chairman, about the Federal effort and the Federal need to get conservation in place.

We have actually grouped our recommendations into eight areas, and I am just going to mention those briefly and I am only going to key in on just about four or five recommendations and summarize those—ones that we think are very important.

In addition to the ones that I mention this morning, we are going to be talking about targeting and a range of the other soil and water conservation programs as well.

But, basically, we have divided our recommendations into eight areas, one being the need for a national policy on conserving soil resources; two being the importance of developing a coordinated conservation program; three, characterizing and identifying conservation needs and opportunities on agricultural lands; four, policy strategies for controlling erosion on fragile soils; five, coordinating conservation and commodity support price programs; six, conservation strategies on moderately erosive lands; and, seven, improving conservation program cost effectiveness, which includes the role of resource inventories and program evaluation. Then, eight, we are going to talk about budgetary, institutional and policy concerns. So our recommendations are going to go across all of those areas.

Now, starting out and just briefly going through some of the major recommendations, we strongly feel that there needs to be a national policy developed on soil conservation. We would like to see one incorporated in the 1985 farm bill—one that would cut across more than just USDA, into other agencies, to the other agencies that have programs and Federal agencies that involve soil and soil conservation efforts, so that they are well aware of what USDA is doing.

That is not to say, of course, that this conservation policy would not be important for all of the USDA agencies. We found a very similar lack of this policy coordination, of course, in the farmland protection area. Director Werries from Illinois talked about that this morning in the sense of various Federal agencies doing projects that were not in concert with the goals of USDA in preserving prime ag land.

We see the same need for a soil conservation policy—one that would cut across all the various agencies within USDA.

That gets to our second point about coordinating these various conservation programs within USDA. That really forms the basis for one of our major recommendations that we are making at this time. The reason we feel the opportunity is there is that if a second year program for set-asides is announced very shortly, we think that now is the time to start working to integrate the commodity programs and the soil conservation programs once and for all so that we can start to get soil conservation at the same time we are dealing with a supply and demand problem.

As you know, in the previous hearings we pointed out the need to categorize. As a matter of fact, I was interested in Senator Zorinsky's comment that he made to Clarence Durban about grading soils. I think that eventually we are going to have to work in that category.

As you know, we have laid out these three different soil categories and how important that is. I think within these three categories, there can be some grading done, and I think that the commodity programs really have to work with that kind of a grading program.

For example, I do not think that we should be setting aside land in that first category, or retiring it. I do not think it is necessary, in our most prime ag land, that that should not be diverted. In any diversion program, we should be trying to divert land in the second and third category, because at the same time of getting that land out of production and cutting back if we have a surplus problem, we are going to be achieving good soil conservation. So I think that is just one element within the commodity program that needs to be integrated.

In addition to that, of course, we are interested in implementing as soon as possible what we have termed the "SCRAP" program, the soil conservation acreage reserve program. In using the word "scrap," that does not mean you scrap it forever; it can be recycled.

But what we are aiming at here is to use the set-aside program to establish some long-term contracts with farmers to get some of this more highly erosive land out of production, and get it out of production immediately.

This is not going to happen in 1 year, Mr. Chairman. It is going to take a period of years, and every time there is a set-aside program, I think we can reach in and get more of this highly erosive land out of production.

Combining that kind of approach with Senator Armstrong's legislation, which I understand you are going to be marking up this week, to discourage more of that kind of land from coming in, then I think we have started to really get a handle on the problem. It is going to take some time, but it can be done.

I think it is important that each time we have a set-aside program, we offer these long-term contracts. Since it would be on a bid basis, and since it could be either in lump sum, either in grain or in cash, I think there will be a lot of takers and I think that we could move relatively quickly.

As I pointed out last week, 12 to 13 million acres in this highly erosive category that are now in production would reduce sheet and rill erosion by almost one-third. That is a substantial reduction. It is easy to take shots at the current program, which is only going to reduce erosion, at best, by 2 or 3 percent.

But the reason is, of course, that the commodity programs have such a tremendous impact on farmers' decisions on which land they are going to put in production. Of course, in the past it has encouraged some of this erosive land to come into production.

So we think that is a very, very important program, and it could be implemented immediately. We are concerned that if they are not able to implement it on a national basis this year, again, as I mentioned last week, we should go with a pilot program in at least 150 or more counties that we would choose that could use this program. Within a year, we could determine how effective it is going to be, and it could be coupled right in with a second-year set-aside program, whether they use a cash payment-in-kind program or whether it is going to be strictly a cash-basis program.

I would like to see it tried. I have not found anyone yet who has told me that it is impossible to do that; that it is going to take additional legislation. Most people I have talked to in the Department have said that with the authority they have used under PIK, there is no reason why they could not incorporate this kind of a program as part of any second-year PIK.

I could go on and on with additional recommendations, but I think this is a very important one. We have many others. I think this is one that we need to work on in order to get an answer out of the Department very soon, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JEPSEN. Do you have plans or arrangements or appointments set up to present this and to go over it with the Department?

Mr. GRAY. Yes, sir, we do. As a matter of fact, tomorrow afternoon, I will be coordinating that with your staff.

Senator JEPSEN. I assume that has been done with open arms and they have welcomed you.

Mr. GRAY. At least at this point, they are agreeable.

Senator JEPSEN. There is a sense of urgency, as you have indicated, and there is a sense of urgency nationally that we announce as quickly as possible what we are going to do. It is unfortunate that we did not have what we are doing now applied last year when we had the big sweep because the participation in PIK, I think, was even greater than anyone anticipated.

Mr. GRAY. I think we probably would have picked up a lot of that highly erosive land in the program; I am sure we would have.

Senator JEPSEN. You, I am sure, would favor, as was indicated by Mr. Durban, some more permanent ways of recognizing those who have, by way of rotation and other good practices, practiced conservation in these commodity programs?

Mr. GRAY. Yes, sir, I think that is an excellent idea. I think it is high time that it be put in place.

Senator JEPSEN. You have appeared at a number of these hearings. I do not want to be asking you the same questions twice here, but I believe I recall that you are also in favor of looking at some type of long-term, coordinated agreements with the set-aside lands for wildlife preservation and conservation that tie right in with it. The cover many times can be one and the same or similar?

Mr. GRAY. That is right, and there is great interest. As a matter of fact, at the JEC hearings I did not have an opportunity to mention to Ms. Holt the concern with the Chesapeake Bay area and some of the sediment that is going into the bay.

This kind of program where you retire some of that land for 5, 7, 10 years would have a substantial positive impact on the bay. And there is strong support among many of the wildlife groups and other environmental groups for this kind of program, so I think there is a good tie-in.

I mean, if we are trying to reduce over-production right now, but more importantly in many ways we are trying to get the people in commodity programs to think conservation, and this is going to really make them do it; they are going to have to consider it.

Senator **Jepsen**. Your 700 participants in the survey—was there a number of livestock feeders included in that?

Mr. **Gray**. Yes.

Senator **Jepsen**. Can you bust those out as to their particular responses in this?

Mr. **Gray**. Yes, we could. I could not do that right at this moment, but we could do that. We have them all separated by their enterprises.

Senator **Jepsen**. If it is convenient and if it can be done—and I would provide staff to help, if need be—I would like to break out their responses and what their main interests and suggestions were by way of participating.

There is a growing feeling—unfortunately, it is not a very positive one—among those folks that they have been left in a lurch and discriminated against, with some justification, in these programs.

Mr. **Gray**. We will do that.

Senator **Jepsen**. I would be interested in finding out what their suggestions were.

I do not have any further questions at this time. I thank you for your testimony. Do you have any closing statement for the record, sir?

Mr. **Berg**. I followed up on the question you had last week after I commented that it would be good to know what the farmers themselves have decided to do this year when they did take advantage of PIK. What lands did they set aside? What was the quality of the soil, and so forth?

I am encouraged to find that the Department, under the leadership of the Secretary, has asked ASCS and the Soil Conservation Service to look at nearly 300 counties as to what kind of use the land is going to be getting that has been set aside in terms of a conserving use.

It does tie back to the sampling points and the types of soil associations that we have available from the national resources inventory. There has been discussion with the Iowa State statistical lab on their capability in this regard. The one thing that is troubling is that they will not have this information until late this fall.

But with the people having made the decisions for this year, had there been some assurance, as Bob points out, that set-aside would have had some future, there could have been some investments in putting that land into a more permanent use, because putting it back to grass even in the better parts of the country takes an investment and takes time.

Some of these soils we are talking about—it takes at least 2 or 3 years to get a good stand of grass and there has to be some continuity in terms of what kind of a future that has.

So I think we need to continue to work to utilize every possible means that is available to find out what has been done and what we can build on for the future, because these massive land use changes that have occurred this year are a golden opportunity in terms of some of these very critical areas that have contributed so heavily to our soil loss.

Mr. GRAY. I have one other comment, Mr. Chairman, and that involves land taken out for an extended period of time, 7 to 10 years. I think that that gives us an opportunity if that land needs to come back in, and I think there would have to be a clause in any contract that under emergency conditions, that land would have to be brought in.

But I think it would have to be clear to the landowner that it would only be brought in where conservation practices were put in place, and I think that is the way we can finally get a hook into that land because somebody would say, "Well, if you are going to take it out for 7 to 10 years and then that time lapses, then we are back in the same cycle in the early 1990's."

I think there would have to be an agreement beforehand that before any of that land came in, particularly some of the most highly erosive of that, there would have to be soil conservation practices in place.

Senator JEPSEN. Any particular reason why you picked 7 years as opposed to 5 or 6 or 4 or 8?

Mr. GRAY. No. Actually, we have looked at a range. In fact, I think my testimony is a little bit conflicting there. I talked once about 7 and then I mentioned 5 to 10. But I think that range of between 5 and 10—and I was using an average of 7—it seems to me that when policies are put in place, it sort of takes that length of time, really, before you begin to get a noticeable impact. I think that time period would be sufficient.

Senator JEPSEN. Well, 7 years is a pretty oldtime recommendation, you know, for conserving the land.

Mr. BERG. Yes, it is.

Senator JEPSEN. You will find that in the Bible that is what it says: every seventh year, you shall let the land rest. So, that soil conservation idea, like a lot of other things, is not all that new.

Mr. BERG. Mr. Chairman, we also have the very practical recognition that many of the things that are in place are going to carry us through this decade, and this could be added to that.

What we are really talking about is to have things that will very successfully do the job, hopefully, in the next decade, which is not all that far away—only 7 years. In terms of long range soil and water conservation needs, we look beyond this century.

Senator JEPSEN. I thank you, and I was most sincere and appreciative when I said that if there are two giants in this whole area in this country, it is certainly you two. I appreciate all the help that you have given and I look forward to keeping this momentum going. Thank you very kindly.

Rupert Cutler of the National Audubon Society, welcome to the Senate Agriculture Committee.

I suspect we have some 4-H members here today from Texas where the beautiful bluebonnets grow. There is a song about that.

Well, welcome, all you folks from Texas. I hope you enjoy your visit here in Washington.

Rupert Cutler from the National Audubon Society, are you from Washington?

Mr. CUTLER. I live in New York City.

Senator JEPSEN. You live in New York City. Well, welcome to Washington and you may proceed. As I have indicated before to other witnesses, your written testimony will be entered into the record as if read, and you may then proceed in any way you so desire.

STATEMENT OF M. RUPERT CUTLER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROGRAMS AND CHAPTER RELATIONS, NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Mr. CUTLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before your committee on behalf of the National Audubon Society.

Established in 1905, National Audubon is one of the oldest and largest nonprofit membership organizations devoted to natural resources conservation and protection of the natural environment, with over half a million members today and 485 local chapters. Audubon's 300 staff members are stationed in 10 regional offices and Washington, D.C. in addition to our New York City headquarters. They conduct and lead a variety of research, education, and citizen involvement programs.

Audubon maintains 75 wildlife sanctuaries, several of which are agricultural properties and one of which is a large ranch in Arizona devoted to range management studies. Wise use and sustained yield management of the Nation's land is a high priority goal of our organization. The forthcoming issue of Audubon magazine will feature a lengthy special section on the problems of soil erosion.

The focus of the National Audubon Society's programs is on the well-being of our native plants and animals, particularly endangered, migratory, and nongame species of birds and other animals. Cropland, pastureland, and rangeland constitute important habitat for many of these species, so I am here today to support Federal policies and programs explicitly designed to benefit wildlife while achieving other complementary conservation objectives, such as soil and water conservation. We think these goals are compatible and should be considered simultaneously.

Having served as the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture responsible for the administration of the Soil Conservation Service during the period 1977 through 1980 when the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act was passed, the first RCA nationwide appraisal of soil and water conditions was drafted, and the national agricultural land study was conducted, I appear before you because of my longstanding professional and personal interest in programs related to the conservation of land, soils and water resources.

As chairman of the Committee on Habitat on Private Land of the Wildlife Society—the International Association of Professional Wildlife Biologists—I am seeking forums such as this within which to plead the case of the wild birds and animals whose homes are at risk as man alters his environment.

The very survival of some of our traditional upland game species, many nongame species, various kinds of invertebrates and certain rare plants depends upon the habitat left, created or altered by private landowners and operators.

Some important ecosystems are not represented within public land systems, such as the National Park System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the National Forest System. Thus, their survival is in the hands of private landowners.

Not that we see wildlife as the primary management objective of many private landowners, except in a case where fee hunting or user charges for other wildlife-related recreational activities, such as camping, are possible, but we do see wildlife conservation as an important national purpose which may be accomplished, at little or no extra expense or complexity, at the same time that other farm programs, go forward, if the impact on wildlife is taken into account in the design of new programs, and wildlife needs are provided for in statute and regulation.

Mr. Chairman, we share the growing confidence expressed by other organizations and conservation experts that substantial progress can and should be made in the next few years in controlling the ravages of soil erosion.

We see no overwhelming technological or economic barriers in the way of conservation progress. With proper guidance and a few policy innovations, our Federal, State, and local conservationists should become far more successful in getting the conservation job done where it is needed—on the land. We also are heartened by the responsiveness to soil and water resources conservation needs evident among farmers and ranchers throughout rural America, including the private agribusiness sector. Conservation makes sense as much to the astute businessman as it does a cost-conscious farmer or a conservationist.

The National Audubon Society urges this subcommittee and the Congress as a whole to continue exercising leadership and foresight in support of effective Federal soil, water, and wildlife conservation programs.

We believe that the Congress ultimately must be relied upon to overcome the historical institutional inertia and interagency warfare within the executive branch which has come to plague initiatives to improve the effectiveness of conservation program activities.

In passing the Soil and Water Resources Act of 1977, Congress mandated the conservation agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to get their collective act together. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, it appears the Department has been unable to make very much progress in this direction since passage of the RCA 5 years ago.

Still, we believe RCA constitutes a solid foundation upon which to build a more cost effective new generation of conservation programs. We urge you, Mr. Chairman, to insist that this new potential be fully realized.

Let me give you some examples of new conservation opportunities which Audubon believes the USDA should take full advantage of through new program initiatives. During this growing season, up to some 82 million acres of land will be idled under the payment-in-kind and set-aside programs, at an expense to the taxpayer of over $10 billion.

A little rough arithmetic leads one to the observation that we are paying something over $120 per acre of land enrolled in a conservation use under the PIK program. Audubon is aware of the budgetary and political arguments for PIK, but believes it is crucial for this subcommittee not to let the Congress of the United States spend that much money without full and fair consideration of the tremendous conservation benefits that also could have been bought at little or no additional cost.

We are very much aware that the Department did not have time to develop and implement conservation features in the 1983 PIK program. However, preparing the Department for such conservation opportunities was the basic purpose of the RCA program. The fact that a third of the Nation's cropland is idled under Government programs in 1983, with little more than a nod in the direction of wildlife and other conservation needs, is a sad testament to the lack of sensitivity to conservation potential evident in the last few years.

Mr. Chairman, consider the PIK at a pragmatic level. Under the 1983 PIK program's whole base bid option, county committees were required to accept bids in order from the least expensive to the highest. Now, suppose one farmer bids 70 bushels of corn to idle his entire 1,000-acre farm of highly erosive land, while his neighbor, farming 1,000 acres of flat, nonerosive soils bid 69.5 bushels. The result is that the county committee accepts the low bid, idling good land and allowing 500 acres of fragile soils to continue to erode.

If the PIK regulations had granted county committees flexibility and judgment to consider conservation benefits in accepting whole base bids, millions of additional tons of top soil would have been saved this year at essentially no extra cost. It would be sensible to allow farmers, whenever possible, an opportunity under commodity price support programs, or the ACP, to submit to the USDA a per-acre bid specifying the compensation and terms the farmer would accept in return for an extended period, permanent vegetative cover on erosive lands currently under cultivation. The Department could then accept the most cost-effective bids received in light of both production adjustment and conservation benefits.

A long term land nondegradation policy is what is needed rather than emergency programs that meet the needs of a few who know how to work the system to their advantage. A voluntary, long term conservation land reserve program could start integrating conservation programs.

In the past such a reserve was not considered to be practical, but given this crop year when one-third of our cropland is in reserve, the concept of long term retirement programs is timely and would complement the current set-aside programs.

As you know, several land retirement programs have been used since the mid-1950's to reduce crop surpluses. The Agriculture Act of 1970 authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer funds to Federal, State, or local units of government for acquisition of cropland for open space, wildlife, or other public values.

Long term land retirement contracts became available to land owners with passage of the Agricultural Act of 1956, known as the

Soil Bank. That portion of the Soil Bank known as the conservation reserve offered 5- or 10-year land retirement contracts, the last of which expired in 1969. The cropland adjustment program, which also provided for 5- or 10-year contracts, authorized by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965, retired millions of acres in 1968 and 1969. Acreages have been diverted or set aside since 1961.

Long term retirement programs would permit farmers to plan crop rotations more efficiently and to maintain protective cover on retired land at minimum cost. Program costs are less and the cover established provides public benefits by reduced erosion and siltation, increased wildlife production, and a more diverse and attractive landscape.

Partial farm retirement, as opposed to whole farm retirement, minimizes economic and social impacts, distributing retired land and payments more widely. We urge the subcommittee to consider a program of long-term contracts on a voluntary, partial farm basis.

PIK could also offer incentives to select set-aside acreages designed to maximize soil, water quality, and wildlife benefits. For example, the edges of fields, travel strips or linked small tracts are especially beneficial to wildlife. Water quality is improved when filter strips are planted adjacent to streams or bodies of water. In fact, such buffer zones have been attached to PIK programs in Virginia and Maryland in order to filter out nutrients and pesticides by natural cover instead of letting them run off into the Chesapeake Bay. The buffer zones can then be managed as wildlife habitat.

Mr. Chairman, Audubon commends you on your major role in this critical and timely issue. We support your efforts in this area, and believe that substantial program improvements are within reach if the Department is provided with the necessary encouragement and guidance.

Five agenda items which should be at the top of the subcommittee's list, we suggest, are: One, plans for the Department to incorporate meaningful soil, water, and wildlife habitat conservation provisions into the 1984–85 PIK or other commodity programs; second, progress made in implementing the forthright and constructive recommendations of the 1981 Agricultural Conservation Program Evaluation Report.

Third, we think you should investigate why the Department of Agriculture has failed to implement two key provisions of the 1981 farm bill: The special areas conservation program and the Farmland Protection Policy Act; fourth, plans for the wide use and expeditious analysis of the results of the 1982 national resource inventory so that policies and program expenditures can benefit quickly from the tremendous new wealth of valuable information contained in the 1982 NRI; and, fifth, improving the mechanisms of delivery and the analytical soundness of the technical assistance services made available to farmers so that the Department can more successfully promote use of sophisticated, cost effective soil conservation systems that go beyond installation of an individual practice.

While we believe administrative and budgetary oversight offers the greatest potential for almost immediate program improvement, Audubon also strongly supports a number of legislative initiatives before the subcommittee.

In particular, we enthusiastically endorse Senate bill 663, introduced by Senator Armstrong. Our many Audubon members in Colorado were sufficiently concerned about soil erosion that they became one of the first support groups for Senator Armstrong's bill. National Audubon hereby adds its support to the growing number of proponents of this innovative legislation, which we view as an important step toward addressing effectively the very serious problem of soil erosion.

It makes no sense to subsidize those who convert fragile grasslands to crop production at any time. The absurdity of this program shortcoming is underscored now by the need for farmers to idle up to 82 million acres of existing cropland in the PIK/set-aside program. The time for enactment of the sodbuster bill is surely at hand.

Incidentally, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if you saw in the current issue of Time magazine the article on this very subject. I am going to submit for your consideration for inclusion in the record. It is called "Carving Out a New Dust Bowl," and it appeared in the June 27, 1983, issue of Time magazine. It is on that very subject.[1]

We would like to take this opportunity to urge, either through appropriate legislative or administrative initiatives, that lands not currently included within a farm's commodity program base acreage should be designated as ineligible in the future for participation in commodity programs.

The conversion of lands now planted in grass or pasture to erosive, intensive cropping should also be discouraged through other penalties and provisions, such as restricted eligibility for farm credit loans and crop insurance. Senator Armstrong's sodbuster bill would be a major step toward this end.

The combination of targeting and the recent PIK initiative point to the need for a more rational use of the Nation's soil resources during periods of crop surplus. Erosion and sedimentation are sufficiently serious as to demand more thoughtful and mutually consistent application of commodity price support and soil conservation programs than realized thus far.

Audubon urges conservation programs more permanent and less vulnerable to periodic crop surpluses and unpredictable economic conditions. Commodity price support programs could offer farmers multiyear land retirement contracts consistent with production adjustment goals. For lands not covered by a commodity program, the agricultural conservation or Great Plains conservation programs could be used to encourage the establishment of permanent vegetative cover on highly erosive lands.

The several bills now circulating on soil erosion are testimony to the very great interest in soil erosion on both sides of the aisle in both Chambers of Congress, and from producers, conservationists and a whole spectrum of political opinion.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the 1982 national resource inventory will provide an excellent opportunity for many people, including our nationwide Audubon membership and the Wildlife Society, to learn about erosion control opportunities.

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[1] See p. 431 for a reprint of the article from Time magazine.

The Department of Agriculture appears to be soliciting a wider base of support. A March 1983 farm program fact sheet on the PIK program encouraged local wildlife and environmental groups to offer assistance to interested farmers on planting cover benefiting wildlife.

We pledge our assistance with efforts directed toward such mutual conservation goals and look forward to working with this subcommittee in implementing the 1981 farm bill, the RCA, and other conservation legislation.

I promise to provide you, Mr. Chairman, with the final report of a Wildlife Society Committee on Habitat on Private Lands effort—a committee which I chair—when the committee completes its work on this report later this summer. It should be of interest to your wildlife advisory committee, and we appreciate your personal interest in this issue which is so important to us.

Thank you.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Mr. Cutler. I would be pleased to be able to advise you that the sodbuster bill is going to be marked up Thursday. I have had two hearings on it, one last session of Congress and one this one, in which we gave it full billing and it has my enthusiastic support.

I am also advised that with regard to the lack of implementation of two key provisions of the 1981 farm bill, the USDA is to have an initial report some time this week and we can advise that it is coming on this—plans for the Department to incorporate meaningful soil, water, and wildlife habitat in the new PIK.

It is on the front burner. I wrote a letter very early on that and we did manage to get it extended, as you know, a few weeks. Commonsense would dictate we should have had it included in the first place for the grazing or cutting to permit wildlife.

Mr. CUTLER. That is very encouraging news, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Senator JEPSEN. And they moved on that, as you know, and we did get a nationwide extension.

You were very kind in your remarks and very gracious when you indicated that you felt and realized and understood there was a lack of time when they developed—I believe those were your words—this PIK program this year.

Mr. CUTLER. Certainly.

Senator JEPSEN. The problem is I have looked in history and I find in everyday activities here that that precious commodity, time, which just seems to get away—in this all-consuming atmosphere, it is used often for many things. We just simply, in the press of the schedule, could not work it in, and so on.

I think you probably concur with me. I think that is not acceptable and there has got to be an answer, with all the people and all the staff and all the facilities that we have.

Mr. CUTLER. And all the data that we had from the RCA appraisal process.

Senator JEPSEN. To set these priorities and to move on and to get about doing it.

I thank you for not only your testimony, but your support in helping to coordinate. Thanks to my staff and Karla Perri and others, we have been trying to bring together all the pertinent associations representing all areas of agriculture, conservation, and wildlife. I think they are inseparable.

Realizing that the chain is about as strong as its weakest link, if we can get everybody linked together and going down the road together, I think we have a much better chance of getting positive action and keeping momentum going.

You are the chairman of the National Audubon Society?

Mr. **Cutler**. Senior vice president.

Senator **Jepsen**. Senior vice president. You know how difficult it is to keep a national momentum going on something.

Mr. **Cutler**. And to get it started.

Senator **Jepsen**. And to get it started. I think one of the ways of doing that, certainly, is to get many hands and many groups going in the same direction with some coordinated guidelines and some goals.

Mr. **Cutler**. We can reinforce one another.

Senator **Jepsen**. I look forward to that.

Mr. **Cutler**. I would like to provide particularly the committee staff with a photocopy of an article I just encountered yesterday. It is from the Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review, volume 10, No. 3, December 1982–January 1983. It is entitled "Soil Conservation Programs Amidst Faltering Environmental Commitments and the New Federalism." It is by Dr. John B. Braden and Donald L. Uchtmann of the University of Illinois, and it is a very compresensive review of soil conservation programs and suggestions for reform of some of those programs. I think you and your committee will find that of interest.[1]

Senator **Jepsen**. I thank you for that addition.

I thank you for your testimony and I look forward to continuing to work together with you. Rachel Carson some years ago with her "Silent Spring" turned out to be quite a prophet.

Mr. **Cutler**. You are so right.

Senator **Jepsen**. I have indicated, early on, to staff that I would hope that we could have a duplicate by way of prophecy, in some publication with regard to this total picture.

Mr. **Cutler**. Hugh Bennett, of course, was the first Chief of the Soil Conservation Service and his political role led to the founding of the Soil Erosion Service, which became the Soil Conservation Service.

Senator **Jepsen**. Right.

Mr. **Cutler**. But if the message needs to be repeated——

Senator **Jepsen**. We need a catalytic agent, such as that book and the message that it provided. I would like to see that woven in, and maybe we can all participate in something like that.

Mr. **Cutler**. Jim Risser from the Des Moines Register has done a pretty good job within the circulation of that newspaper, but that needs to be nationally done too, as you say.

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[1] The article referred to above has been retained in the committee files.

Senator **Jepsen**. Jim is internationally, I guess, now recognized, being a Pulitzer Prize winner for his efforts, and we are very proud and pleased to be associated with a fellow Iowan, Jim Risser.

Thank you very much.

Mr. **Cutler**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator **Jepsen**. Mary Kay Thatcher, American Farm Bureau Federation, a native of Iowa—welcome, Mary Kay, and as I have indicated before, your written statement will be entered into the record as if read, so you may proceed in any manner you desire.

STATEMENT OF MARY KAY THATCHER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION, AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Ms. **Thatcher**. I will try to be brief, Senator.[1] We appreciate having the opportunity to testify this morning. I have included a copy of much of our policy on soil conservation and I would like to hit just a couple of points.

When our voting delegates met this past January, they probably spent more time rewriting the soil conservation policy than almost any other policy which was considered. Beyond the RCA process, you will note from our policy No. 1 that we do strongly favor voluntary programs, using cost sharing and tax incentives.

As you know, we have been very supportive of your efforts toward obtaining a tax credit for soil conservation measures. We are also very supportive of the targeting mechanism and using targeting money for most critical erosion problems.

We favor long-term agreements, and feel that efforts such as the Great Plains conservation program should be continued. As you know, we have supported Senator Armstrong's sodbuster bill and have worked toward implementation of that bill for several years now.

In talking about the RCA program, we do applaud this administration for its efforts in seeing that RCA was started and was able to be finished. We do have three major concerns with the RCA process.

While we do agree that erosion control should be considered as the highest priority under RCA, we are concerned that the USDA budget proposals do not reflect such a priority selection. Less than 5 percent of the total soil conservation budget is now being used to cost share erosion control on cropland with an excessive erosion problem.

Second, and I think of most concern to our members is that while we recognize the importance of accurate data on the status of both soil and water conservation, we do not think this data needs to be updated every 5 years. Public Law 95-192 does call for an appraisal to be made every 5 years

Until this past year, our policy had one simple line that we said "we favor repeal of the Resource Conservation Act", and essentially we said that because our members were tired of studies, and when one study was done another one started. They felt very strongly that enough studies had been done and enough data had been gathered, and they would rather see these personnel that were being put to work collecting data out there in the field helping with technical assistance.

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[1] See p. 432 for the prepared statement of Ms. Thatcher.

So we would like to see Public Law 95-192 changed to at least lengthen the appraisal period to a 10-year cycle.

The third concern is that when the President sent his statement of policy to Congress last December, he said that he anticipated his future budget proposals would fall within the balance of the recommended program. He did say that economic and fiscal matters would have to be taken into context on that.

But then, less than a month later when he sent his budget proposal up, it was below even the low bound, which, as you know, is a horizontal line at the 1983 budget level. I have included a chart on the last page which does show this. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words.

I guess our general concern here would be that enough funding be kept in the Soil Conservation Service under the RCA program.

Along the same lines, we are concerned that some of the provisions in the 1981 farm bill have not been enacted. One of the main things would be the grants program, and we hope that funding for that and other programs which were authorized under the 1981 farm bill would be appropriated in the near future.

Senator **Jepsen**. Thank you, Mary Kay. In your opinion, should the Federal commodity support program be adjusted to require soil and water conservation programs?

Ms. **Thatcher**. No, Senator. Our members do not favor that type of cross-compliance.

Senator **Jepsen**. What sort of incentive do you think would—do you favor the sodbuster bill?

Ms. **Thatcher**. Yes, we do.

Senator **Jepsen**. Is that a form of cross-compliance?

Ms. **Thatcher**. I know where you are coming from in that question, but over 2½ years ago our members felt it was important enough to distinguish the sodbuster bill from other cross-compliance measures and single it out in policy, saying they do support that concept, and yet the general concept of cross-compliance between farm programs and soil conservation, they do not support.

Senator **Jepsen**. How do they feel about Farmers Home mortgage loans requiring soil conservation planning before they receive loans?

Ms. **Thatcher**. I think that if you had asked that question a year ago, they would say that was still cross-compliance and they did not favor that. I think there is definitely a change of attitude in the country, and maybe within the next year our members will feel, that cross-compliance is the way to go.

With Farmers Home, we have some reservations about that, in general, because if the farmer really is going to Farmers Home as a lender of last resort, then does he really have the money to also invest in soil conservation measures? So we think there are a few details that would have to be worked out.

Senator **Jepsen**. What sort of incentives besides tax incentives would you think would lead your members to apply conservation practices on their land?

Ms. **Thatcher**. Besides tax credit—I think that would probably be their No. 1 choice, but they are very strongly in support of long-term agreements, such as the Great Plains conservation program.

I think more of a movement toward long-term conservation measures versus 1 year here and 1 year there would be very acceptable.

Senator **Jepsen**. What is your organization's feeling with regard to the PIK program? Are they supportive? What is their position with regard to the next step in the PIK program? Where do we go from here?

Ms. **Thatcher**. Our members have been very supportive of the PIK program. It has given many of them a lot of hope for the first time in 3 or 4 years. Most of them, especially the wheat farmers, would like to see the PIK program extended another year.

However, I think that they realize it is important that the PIK program be viewed as temporary and not a permanent program.

Senator **Jepsen**. Who should pay for conservation, farmers, consumers, a combination, or how should such a payment be collected?

Ms. **Thatcher**. I think a lot of our members would like to have it be some type of a joint effort, some type of a cost sharing between possibly the State and Federal Government and the farmers themselves.

Senator **Jepsen**. Have you heard about the provision that would allow the use of some of the PIK acres for wildlife plots and habitat development?

Ms. **Thatcher**. No, Senator, I have not.

Senator **Jepsen**. Do you think that your organization would be interested in keeping some of the acres in a multiyear, long-term set-aside for wildlife feed and habitat purposes, if they could do it on a dual basis of conserving soil and providing this, too?

Ms. **Thatcher**. They might be.

Senator **Jepsen**. I appreciate your testimony. I do not have any further questions. Do you have any comments, finally, for the record?

Ms. **Thatcher**. No, I do not believe so.

Senator **Jepsen**. Excellent report; thank you very much.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for coming here today, and many of your statements and suggestions mirror, in my opinion and those of my colleagues, a change in emphasis of soil conservation policy from a nationally controlled program to a locally controlled program. It should be coupled with a renewed national commitment to managing our soil and water resources wisely.

We need to reinforce the local administration of conservation programs, but we need to be carefully sure we avoid actions that would impede the long-range goals of the overall national effort. We can shift some responsibility back to the States, but we cannot abandon them.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has had 5 years to assess the soil and water needs of this Nation. In my opinion, they have worked hard, but the job is not complete. The proposed national program does not seem to adequately account for many of the local, State, and regional concerns that comprise a comprehensive national effort.

It seems that the answers to the following questions are the key in deciding whether we as a nation want to solve our conservation problem. The question is twofold. First, should the Federal Government require some sort of conservation practice or system in return for Federal financing and technical assistance? If so, it appears that this requirement would be most useful and successful if a conservation incentive was provided.

Second, many of those who participate in the farm price and income support programs or other Federal farm programs, and those who participate in conservation programs, are not necessarily the farmers who should implement conservation practices on their land.

How do we convince these other farmers to participate in a conservation system? It seems to me that the answer and ultimate goal of a national policy must be to install a conservation and resource appreciation ethic among those who manage the Nation's farmland.

This subcommittee has taken a thoughtful and pragmatic approach to hearing the views of many different groups and individuals across the country. We intend to continue that. The staff will now review and analyze the information collected based on the testimony presented and the questions asked and responded to, and this subcommittee will issue the committee print some time early this fall.

Based on this analysis, Congress will take further action as needed, as well as presenting recommendations to the administration.

Is there any information or material that the staff would like to add?

[No response.]

Senator **Jepsen**. Hearing none, the Chair now declares this meeting adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:41 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned, subject to call of the Chair.]

APPENDIX

MISSISSIPPI HEARING

STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER W. JEPSEN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

I would like to welcome all of you here today on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry, and Environment of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

As chairman of the subcommittee, I am looking forward to hearing your views on this issue of national priority—the preservation of the productive resource base of this Nation for both the present generation and for the future generations.

We no longer can afford to look the other way as our precious heritage—our soil—is depleted and eroded. Once gone, our soil never returns.

For this reason, your views on the implementation of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977—the R.C.A.—and your thoughts on the direction of soil conservation policies of the future are vitally important.

Before I discuss the purpose of these hearings and what we hope to accomplish, I would like to express my appreciation to Senator Cochran for his support in this endeavor.

Before we call the first witness, let me briefly explain why we are conducting these hearings and what we hope to accomplish.

As most of you know, the subcommittee held initial hearings on March 9, 1983, in Washington, D.C., on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) Resource Conservation Act (R.C.A.) final report and program document.

This hearing was the first major Senate effort in 2 years to focus national attention on the serious soil erosion and water conservation problems that we as a nation must confront over this coming decade. The initial hearing set the thrust for what is intended to be a nationwide congressional investigation of soil and water conservation problems, and how the U.S.D.A. is confronting these problems.

These field hearings are our effort to bring home to you, the citizens of this country, the depth of this problem. But most importantly, it is to establish that we as Senators, representing you, are dedicated to solving these problems.

It is to assure you that we enthusiastically accept the responsibility for finding some solutions. But we cannot do this without your help and input.

Continued Federal interest in soil and water conservation programs is essential if the United States is to meet future domestic and worldwide demands and needs for our food and fiber products.

Senator Cochran and I both feel that an enduring Federal commitment is paramount for the continued success of our soil and water conservation programs. Similarly, I think we both are concerned that this commitment does not seem to be forthcoming from the administration.

This year, in his proposed budget, President Reagan requested $300 million less for soil and water conservation activities than last year. Even in times of fiscal austerity this seems to be particularly severe and unwarranted. It suggests that good land stewardship is not a priority in our overall farm effort. To me, adequate soil protection and water conservation efforts are the foundation upon which most farmers would want to rely. Other concerns are generated because of the noncommittal tone of and conflicting statements in the final report and program document.

For example, in the 1981 R.C.A. draft report, it states: "Even with the most optimistic outlook . . . soil erosion after 50 years would still exceed the nondegradations level." In the final report that we are examining today, the first objective is to lead to nondegradation of the Nation's soil and water resources. Yet, if the most optimistic outlook is not expected to achieve nondegradation in 50 years, how can we expect a scaled down program proposed in the final report and restricted by the 1984 proposed budget to lead to the nondegradation of our soil and water resources?

We are further concerned that neither the priorities nor the proposed program refer to the retention of prime and unique farmland. In addition, the 1981 farm bill authorized the Department to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the special areas conservation programs: the matching grants program and the R.C. and D. program, among others.

The proposed budget will not pay for the administration and implementation of these and other conservation programs. Congress can and has restored funding for many of these programs.

We are communicating directly with Secretary Block to request administrative actions that would carry out the intent of the law. I know Secretary Block and Chief Pete Myers of the Soil Conservation Service share our concerns, but unfortunately, others in the administration do not.

We cannot progress without your interest and support. We need to know if you share our concerns, where your needs differ, and what you feel is necessary to help you carry out soil and water conservation on the farm.

We went to the administration first and asked for a full and complete explanation of the R.C.A. report. Now we are traveling across the country to listen to the views and opinions of all of you. We will go from Jackson to Kentucky, Iowa, and then on to New England for a regional hearing. Additionally, I am simultaneously conducting a series of Joint Economic Committee hearings to explore all aspects of farm programs—their current effectiveness and their future appropriateness to ongoing farm policies.

As part of that effort, I will be asking government officials, private sector analysts, specialists in academia, farmers, and other citizens how soil and water conservation efforts can be better integrated into all farm policies.

The R.C.A. hearings will culminate at the end of June. The subcommittee will hold the final 1983 hearing on the R.C.A. in Washington, to listen to the views of the farm organization leaders who represent many of your interests as well.

We've heard the administration's view. We are coming to you for your opinion and comment.

We are not telling you what Washington thinks or what Washington wants you to think, or to know. We are asking you first about your needs and for suggestions. Then we will return to Washington and share what we have learned from you today. Congress will debate and deliberate the issues, the questions, and the problems. From these discussions we hope to reach a balance that will serve as a guide to Congress in directing the administration as to what you, the people, want.

We have a full schedule of witnesses today, including some friends from the States of Alabama and Louisiana. You may have your statement placed in the record as if read, and then summarize a few salient points. Both your summary and your full statement will be part of the permanent record. We want to do this to allow ample time for questions.

We are also happy to accept testimony from anyone here today who is not on the panel, but has something prepared for insertion in the record. Finally, we invite all of you to sign the book at the back of the room, with your name and address, for the record.

Senator Cochran, would you like to introduce the first witness, Congressman Dowdy?

STATEMENT OF HON. THAD COCHRAN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

I would like to welcome Senator Jepsen, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry and Environment to Mississippi. I appreciate you bringing this Senate subcommittee to our State to hold hearings on soil erosion and the soil and water conservation program effort that is needed between now and 1987.

Soil erosion is one of the most serious problems facing our nation. I think it is significant that the subcommittee has chosen to come to Mississippi to determine what our conservation problems and needs are. More specifically, you are also looking at what our reaction is to the "National Program for Soil and Water Conservation" released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture last December. You can rest assured that the folks that will be testifying before us today will not hesitate to state their feelings on the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Unfortunately, Mississippi has the third highest cropland soil erosion rate in the 48 contiguous States. We lose over a hundred million tons of soil from our agricultural lands, including cropland, pasture and forest each year. For every ton of topsoil lost to erosion, farmers lose $10 in agriculture production. At the rate of erosion occurring in Mississippi, farmers in the State are losing about $1 billion a year. This is a loss we cannot afford—a loss that we can do something about.

All erosion does not come from agricultural lands. Even though we may concentrate today primarily on soil erosion, water quality and the problems related to agricultural lands, I do not want us to forget that the same problems arise due to erosion from roadside erosion, construction, growth of urban and other nonagricultural land uses. These areas add almost another 30 million tons of soil loss to the hundred million tons that I noted earlier. I have here an article sent to me just a week or two ago by the Honorable Jim Buck Ross, Commissioner of Agriculture here in Mississippi, who is testifying today.

This article, which I will include in the record of this hearing, dramatically points out the need to be concerned about all erosion. It reports how Caney Creek, right here in Jackson, has grown from a small creek to a "25 foot wide monster that is threatening to swallow fences, backyards, utility sheds and ultimately, houses." No conservation program will be effective unless all erosion problems are considered—cropland, pasture, forest, roadside, construction, urban, etc., as well as the improvement or maintenance of water quality.

Mr. Chairman, in the effort to conserve time, I will provide additional information for the record.

I hope that the information we obtain from this hearing and the others you will be holding, Mr. Chairman, across the nation will provide the data and the support we need in the Senate to assure that we have a strong national conservation program. You are to be complemented on the efforts to keep conservation as a priority issues in the Senate and assure the proper level of funding needed to help the States. You can count on my support, and I'm sure you will see today, the support of the people of Mississippi.

Mr. Chairman, we have some excellent witnesses today. I personally know they are all knowledgeable about conservation, the problems and needs of Mississippi, and are the true leaders of conservation in our State. Their testimony will be invaluable. I welcome them to this hearing.

[Reprint from the Clarion-Ledger, Jackson (Miss.) May 9, 1983]

EROSION EATING UP PROPERTY

(By Martin Zimmerman)

The name of this movie is "The Monster that Ate Crestleigh Manor."

The monster is Caney Creek, and if the title sounds exaggerated, listen to Mrs. Evelyn Faye Case of 2554 Crestleigh:

"We bought this house in February, three years ago. It was raining and snowing and we didn't go out and look at the backyard, we didn't look over the fence. The people who sold us the house didn't mention the creek and we can understand why now. It was two weeks after we moved in before we walked back and looked over that fence. When we did, all I could say was 'My God.'"

What Mrs. Case saw was a creek that in 10 years' time had grown from a small trickle of water to a 25-foot-wide monster that is threatening to swallow fences, backyards, utility sheds and, ultimately, houses.

Mrs. Case's neighbor, Jackson police officer W.H. Welch, has aready lost his chain link fence to the rapidly eroding creek bank. And Mrs. Case's other neighbor, Mrs. Robert L. Shaw Jr., who refers to Caney as a "little monster," said the 12-foot easement that once existed beyond their backyard property line has long since washed down the creek.

"Something's got to be done, or there won't be a neighborhood here," Welch warned.

At this point, city officials are in a quandary over exactly what can be done.

City Commissioner Nielsen Cochran met last week with city engineers, but nothing much was decided except that erosion in drainage ditches and creeks is a serious problem.

Although Cochran says he has been "wadin" in ditches ever since I got here in 1977," recent heavy rains have worsened the erosion problems along Caney Creek and the myriad other waterways that drain rainfall from the Jackson area into the Pearl River.

The increase in erosion has set the wheels of the city's bureaucracy to turning, but Cochran freely admits he doesn't know what the long-range solution is.

"We've got to come up with some solutions and not just worry about it every time it rains," Cochran said. "Some of these problems have got to be addressed or we're going to have severe problems, not just with people losing their homes, but with city bridges and streets being damaged."

Cochran acknowledges that the city has no comprehensive policy for dealing with drainage problems. Past administrations dealt with erosion on a mostly ad hoc basis, he said, with some mayors using city work crews to deal with severe erosion problems while others adopted unwritten policies that the city would not go on private property to control erosion.

The big roadblock is money.

Jack Winstead of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service estimates it would cost $8,000 to $10,000 per house to correct the Caney Creek washout problems, a cost beyond the means of most homeowners.

And Cochran notes that an assessment role, a method in which the city does the work and then divides the cost among the affected homeowners, would also be too expensive.

There doesn't seem to be much federal money available either, beyond block grants and revenue sharing, which have drawbacks of their own. Community Development Block Grants must be used in low-income areas, and the prices of houses on Crestleigh Manor run upwards of $50,000. And the bulk of revenue sharing money generally goes to purchasing capital equipment for city departments.

The Soil Conservation Service has erosion control money available, but that department's main emphasis is protecting farmland from erosion. Rural erosion itself is a massive problem in Mississippi, which has the third highest rate of soil loss to erosion in the nation, and urban erosion often takes a backseat when it comes to allocating federal dollars.

There are other problems. Homeowners who have no erosion problems, but whose property is a source of erosion-causing runoff, often refuse rights of entry to work crews, effectively stifling repair attempts. Cochran said.

Also, efforts to reduce backwater flooding in creeks by clearing the creekbanks of obstacles can actually worsen erosion. The root systems of trees and shrubs help to hold soil in place, and removing the vegetation can lead to severe erosion.

And do-it-yourself solutions don't seem to be the answer either. Residents tell of one homeowner on Crestleigh who paid a private contractor $3,000 to pack heavy clay along the creek bank. Now, one year later, the clay is washed away and Caney Creek is once again advancing toward the house.

One possible solution is combining the resources of two governments to cure erosion problems. The city currently is joined with Hinds County in a cooperative effort to solve drainage woes along Bogue Chitto Creek, which regularly floods the Presidential Hills subdivision in northwest Jackson.

Winstead, who has been wrestling with the problem of urban erosion for years, is on an advisory committee that is reworking the city's subdivision ordinance. He wants the city to adopt a regulation stating that drainage ditches and creeks in subdivisions must have an undeveloped greenbelt extending for 75 to 100 feet on both sides of the waterway.

These greenbelts, Winstead says, would provide a buffer between the home and the water.

Failing that, Winstead said, "the best advice I could give is if you have a ditch on the back lot of a house, don't buy the house."

NATIONAL CONSERVATION RELATED FACTS AND FIGURES

A serious national problem does in fact exist if we are concerned about the future of our food and fiber production capabilities:

A total of 94,000,000 acres of cropland have erosion occurring in excess of tolerable limits.

This is 23 percent of the total land cropped in the United States.

A total of 89 percent of the excessive sheet and rill erosion occurs on 41 million acres. Many of these acres will be idled under 1983 production reduction programs.

Although existing conservation programs have reduced erosion from agricultural lands, total soil erosion increased about 8 percent during the 1970's. Therefore, current efforts are only reducing the rate of erosion increase.

This increase is due to the expansion in the acreage of row crops being grown to meet world demands, the favorable prices, and occasional farm support programs which send the wrong signals.

Due to the dynamics of agriculture, the forces of nature, and the economy, much of the treatment now on the land will need to be replaced or restored within the next 20 years.

The net result of this is that we're losing almost 3 billion tons of soil from our cropland every year.

The environmental and economic impact of this loss is so tremendous, it is unmeasurable. The costs of erosion, such as sediment removal, water pollution and increased food production costs, run into the billions.

Other national conservation facts and figures:

Between 1969 and 1981, full time professional conservationists decreased more than 1,000, approximately 7 percent.

During the same period, the buying power of financial assistance for conservation provided at the national level decreased an average of 6.6 percent per year.

The impact of the two major conservation assistance programs, the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) and the Great Plains Conservation Program (GPCP) has been seriously eroded as funding has failed to keep pace with costs.

ACP funding has been at the $190 million level for the last eight years. The buying power has shrunk by 44 percent during the same period.

GPCP was funded at $22 million in 1976 and again in 1983. However, the 1983 funds will buy only 38 percent as much conservation as was achieved in 1976.

In 1975, ACP assisted approximately 280,000 producers to apply conservation. By 1982, the number it was able to assist had dropped to 220,000.

A total 2,100 GPCP contracts were approved in 1976. Only 700 will be signed in 1983.

The number assisted by these two overtaxed progams in 1983 will be about one-tenth of the 1.7 million farmers participating in the 1983 acreage reductions programs.

Many of the 1.7 million would apply needed conservation on their idled acres if assistance was available.

MISSISSIPPI CONSERVATION FACTS AND FIGURES [1]

Land use	Total		Sheet and rill erosion, tons/ac/yr	Same—National average	Acres treatment needed	Total soil loss, tons/ac/yr
	Acres	Percent				
Cropland	7,302,000	(27.2)	10.6	4.7	6,330,000	77,400,000
Pastureland	4,041,000	(15.1)	2.8	2.6	2,885,000	11,314,000
Rangeland	30,000	—	5.1	2.8	30,000	153,000
Forestland	14,412,000	(53.6)	0.9	1.2	8,564,000	12,970,000
Other	1,088,000	(4.1)	—	—	160,000	—
Total	26,873,000	—	—	—	17,809,000	101,873,000

Fifty-two percent of the cropland is eroding in excess of acceptable limits (5 tons/acre).

Mississippi average annual soil loss from cropland exceeds the national average by 5.9 tons/ac/yr. This is more than double the national average.

[1] Source: 1977 National Resources Inventory, USDA.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN C. STENNIS, A U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

Mr. Chairman, let me first welcome you to Mississippi. I think it is a fine thing you and Senator Cochran are doing, holding this hearing on soil conservation here in this great agricultural state. I certainly hope that the information you gather at this hearing and at similar hearings across the nation will lend support to a stronger program of soil and water conservation.

As you know, soil is an important asset to the economy of this state. With the poor condition of the farm economy at this time, the soil has an increasingly important role. Our farmers must be able to produce the best crop they can with the least cost. Plenty of good quality soil can go a long way in bringing down the cost of production.

However, it costs money to keep this soil and it takes knowledge in the area of soil conservation. It is for this reason that we have depended so heavily on the Soil Conservation Service in the past. In Mississippi, the USDA's Soil Conservation Service works through 82 soil and water conservation districts. These districts cover the entire state.

We have an excellent State Conservationist in Mr. Gene Sullivan. He and his very capable staff have provided valuable leadership in the area of soil and water conservation. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with Mr. Sullivan and his assistant, Mr. Gene Cribba, when they were in my office in Washington last week. They brought me up to date on the soil conservation activities in this state, and on their hopes for increasing conservation in the future.

Mr. Chairman, as I am sure you are well aware, this year marks the 50th anniversary of soil and water conservation in America. I think it is highly fitting that you hold hearings on the effectiveness of the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation in this landmark year. I commend you and Senator Cochran, and all the other members of the Senate Agriculture Committee for the work you are doing and I encourage you to continue to work for the wise use of our soil and water. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. GILLESPIE V. MONTGOMERY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE THIRD DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. Chairman, I wish to commend you and Senator Cochran for holding this hearing. The Soil and Water Conservation programs have always been crucial to the agricultural communities and it is most important that these people have a strong voice in their structure.

You will have before you today experts from the state of Mississippi, as well as state and local conservation groups, farm organizations and the farmers, all of whom are very knowledgeable in this area. You have a real opportunity to catch a glimpse of what the soil and water conservation needs are in the states, and I am certain that you will take into consideration the views that are brought before you this morning. I urge you to do so when you return to Washington to make decisions about the future of the federal soil and water conservation programs.

Again, I commend you for going to the local areas to learn first hand the impact of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Program for Soil and Water Conservation. The local input you will take back to Washington will be most beneficial to Congress in developing future soil and water conservation programs.

STATEMENT OF HON. WEBB FRANKLIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE SECOND DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI

I wish to commend you and your Subcommittee for holding these field hearings for the purpose of reviewing the status of the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation. Certainly, problems relating to soil and water usage and conservation are among the most important problems facing our Nation and the success or failure of our efforts to deal effectively with these problems will have an impact on all segments of our economy and on every single citizen.

Agriculture is of major importance to Mississippi and this is particularly true of the Delta counties that comprise much of the area that I represent. While Mississippi farmers have demonstrated their ability to produce efficiently and abundantly, not only for domestic needs but also for export needs, they clearly recognize that the demands of an expanding world-wide population will require that techniques and programs be developed and implemented that will permit the production of increased supplies of food, feed and fiber crops and forestry resources while enhancing and expanding the capability of our farmers to preserve our resource base. At the same time, we wish to focus attention on the need to preserve the individual's right to make decisions relating to land use practices and programs rather than having these decisions forced on him by bureaucratic interests. The individual's right to make such decisions is an inherent part of our free enterprise system.

Mr. Chairman, I also wish to commend the leadership that you and your Subcommittee are providing in the area of agricultural research and education. These vitally important programs must be maintained at effective levels and I am apprehensive about the stated objective of leaders in the Agricultural Research Service to reduce support for research relating to the development of more efficient and effective insect, weed, and disease control measures. The reduction of support for this kind of production research appears to be based on the false assumption that "we already have all of the answers". Nothing could be farther from the truth and reducing support in these fields would be a major mistake.

As you know, our present Soil and Water Conservation Plan was initiated in the 1930s and provides for flexible programs based on the voluntary cooperation of land users. It depends upon a mixture of local, State and federal activities with conservation objectives determined by local Conservation District and Farmer Committees. This program has worked well and we strongly support the continuation of this approach with emphasis on coordination of program planning and evaluation. We strongly oppose federal centralization of program development and operation.

The Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act was passed by the Congress in 1977. This legislation requires the Secretary of Agriculture to appraise the condition of our soil and water resources on rural nonfederal land. This land, approximately 1.5 billion acres, is mostly privately owned and makes up two-thirds of America's total land area. On this land are the farms, ranches and forests that grow almost all of our food and natural fibers and much of our wood products.

The legislation also requires the Secretary to develop, in consultation with the American public, a National Soil and Water Conservation Program to insure the sustained productivity of soil, water and related resources. In 1978, USDA conducted about 9,000 meetings to solicit public views on resource problems and how to solve them. In 1979, Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., carried out a public opinion survey for the Department. The survey attempted to measure attitudes toward various conservation objectives and programs. In 1980, USDA sought public comments on alternative ways of developing conservation programs. The Department received nearly 65,000 responses containing more than 1.5 million separate comments. After careful analysis of the comments, the USDA prepared a "Preferred Program" and two alternatives and presented all three for public review.

Alternative I would continue current trends—including funding trends—in USDA conservation programs. Alternative II would redirect these programs to target a larger share of USDA assistance to areas with critical resource problems. The "preferred" program would use targeting of critical areas as well as block grants to states to "encourage" local and state governments to increase their roles in planning and carrying out conservation programs.

During the 1981–82 comment period on the alternatives, USDA received about 83,000 responses containing more than 1.7 million comments. A majority of the people commenting voiced support for Alternative I and opposition for Alternative II and the "Preferred Program." Alternative I will continue current trends including funding trends in USDA conservation programs.

During the November 1981–January 1982 RCA public response period, 1,378 responses were received in the State of Mississippi. The over-all reaction clearly showed over 80 percent of the responses opposing the "Preferred Program." The main reason Mississippians were against the Preferred Program was because of the duplication that would occur with the present program and also the extra unneeded costs. Some people felt that politics would influence the proposed Preferred Program because of the increased State role. Also, it was pointed out that Mississippi could not fund conservation programs under the block grant approach.

Over 86 percent of the responses received in Mississippi supported Alternative No. I.

One of the strategies proposed in the "Preferred Programs" would have required farmers to apply conservation measures in accordance with USDA standards before they could qualify for benefits under other USDA programs such commodity price supports, low interest rate loans, cost-sharing and crop insurance. Strong opposition was voiced to the adoption of this cross-compliance feature in any of the soil conservation-related programs.

Mississippi farmers strongly recommended that a higher priority be given information and education efforts as part of the total conservation program. Most farmers want to do a good job of conserving their soil and water resources. Incentive programs, cost-sharing programs and technical assistance is urgently needed at an accelerated rate if such goals are to be achieved.

Mr. Chairman, I am attaching a summary of the responses received in Mississippi during the November 1981–January 1982 RCA public response period. These responses reflect the opinion of a broad cross section of Mississippi farmers on these important issues.

Additionally, I am attaching copy of position statement and recommendations on the RCA questionnaire adopted by the Mississippi Association of Soil Conservation Districts and the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

In conclusion, I wish to join the high majority of Mississippi farmers responding to the RCA questionnaire in support of Alternative No. I which would continue current trends, including funding trends, in USDA conservation programs.

CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on 1,378 responses received in the state of Mississippi during the November 1981–January 1982 RCA public response period. These were responses to the Secretary of Agriculture's Preferred Program for conserving the Nation's soil and water resources. The Program is described in the USDA publication, "1981 Program Report and Environmental Impact Statement, Revised Draft."

RESPONSE

Analysis of the 1,378 responses received shows that there were four major affiliation groups which composed over 80 percent of the responses: (1) Agricultural organization members, 21.9 percent; (2) Conservation District Board members, 11.4 percent; (3) USDA employees, 19.7 percent; and (4) Others, 29.2 percent (including teachers, students, bankers, attorneys, real estate appraisers, and retired citizens).

Over 70 percent of the people responding own or operate a farm or ranch.

PREFERRED PROGRAM

The overall reaction shows over 80 percent of the responses opposed the preferred program.

The main reason people were against the preferred program was because of the duplication that would occur with the present programs and also the extra unneeded costs. Some feel that politics would influence the proposed preferred program because of the state role. Mississippi could not fund conservation programs.

The existing conservation programs are adequate with priorities at the local level and increased funding.

People said the consequences of this preferred program would collapse and disrupt the present nationwide soil and water conservation effort.

Alternative I.—Over 86 percent of the responses supported this alternative. All affiliations supported this alternative of continuing current program trends. People supported this item because it avoids duplication and added costs. Priorities would remain at the local level. Additional funds are needed for this alternative. Emphasis should be on improving the present program.

Alternative II.—Over 66 percent of the responses opposed this alternative of redirecting the federal program.

Feature 1.—The responses showed 84.7 percent support for establishing clear national objectives.

Feature 2.—All responses indicated that there was 80.2 percent support for strengthening the existing partnership among landowners and local and state governments and the federal government.

Feature 3.—Responses opposed providing federal matching block grants to states by 85.4 percent. People indicated that they did not want federal funds for conservation programs reduced. Matching grants should only be provided as additional federal funds.

Feature 4.—Opposition for providing for a local conservation coordinating board was 71.4 percent. People said this would only result in duplication.

Feature 5.—Responses indicated 67.8 percent were opposed to having the local board perform certain duties because of the duplication with existing boards.

Feature 6.—People that responded were opposed by 82.6 percent to provide a State Conservation Coordinating Board. The reason was duplication of existing boards.

Feature 7.—Responses showed 69.9 percent opposition to establishing a National Conservation Board.

Feature 8.—Responses were 79.8 percent opposed to basing cooperative actions on an agreement between each governor and the Secretary of Agriculture.

Feature 9.—Support of 87.8 percent was given by responses to providing closer cooperation and budget coordination among USDA agencies.

Feature 10.—Responses were 65.2 percent in opposition to targeting more USDA funds and personnel to certain areas where erosion threatens agricultural production. People said this feature would be costly and counter productive.

Feature 11.—All responses supported emphasizing cost-efficient conservation measures by 61.8 percent.

Feature 12.—Responses showed 88.3 percent support for evaluating tax incentives for increased use of conservation systems. The Governor of Mississippi and several agency heads made favorable comments on this feature.

Feature 13.—A support of 92.1 percent of the people responding was for emphasizing USDA assistance to farmers for planning and installing conservation systems.

Feature 14.—Reaction to targeting USDA research and education services toward conservation problems that impair agricultural productivity was 82 percent in favor.

Feature 15.—Responses showed 52.8 percent were in favor of setting up pilot projects to test new conservation methods.

Feature 16.—Opposition for this feature was 58.6 percent, which would require landowners to have a conservation plan in order to be eligible for Farmers Home Administration loans. This item is not compatible with a voluntary conservation program.

Feature 17.—Responses showed support by 81.6 percent for evaluating and analyzing conservation progress.

Feature 18.—Responses 'showed 86.3 percent support for minimizing conflicts among features of USDA farm programs that limit conservation objectives.

Feature 19.—All responses supported strengthening data collection and analysis by 81.8 percent.

Feature 20.—Responses indicated 92.9 percent support for expanding the use of long-term agreements between USDA and farmers. Governor Winter gave support to this item, as well as most agencies.

POSITION STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON RCA QUESTIONNAIRE

C. FEATURES OF PREFERRED PROGRAM

1. Establish clear National priorities for addressing Conservation problems.

We support this feature. However, national priorities should not be imposed upon local decision makers. The responsibility for establishing priorities at the local level must remain with the local soil and water conservation districts.

2. Strengthening the existing partnership among landowners and users, local and state governments and the federal government.

We support this, as long as the existing system is used with adequate federal funding. We are opposed to creating any new entities.

3. Provide Federal matching block grants to states by reducing Federal Conservation Program Funds.

We strongly oppose this feature. It would reduce USDA conservation funds which are already significantly below those necessary to carry out needed soil and water conservation programs. Grant funds that can be used for several purposes (technical assistance, financial assistance, education, low income loans and other components of a "total" conservation program) would create competition among agencies and organizations at the state level and could result in significant reduction in direct assistance to farmers in planning and carrying out a soil and water conservation program on their land. Due to the economic condition, Mississippi is not in a position to provide matching funds. This would result in less funds to carry out needed conservation programs. The Federal government must accept responsibility for adequate funding of soil and water conservation work.

4. Providing for a Local Conservation Coordinating Board, made up of representatives of the conservation district, county ASC committee, Extension advisory committee, and other interested parties.

We strongly oppose this feature. Such a board would usurp the responsibilities and authorities of local soil and water conservation districts as established by state law. The creation of such a board would amount to a bureaucracy that would impede the effectiveness of developing and carrying out a local soil and water conservation program. The organizational structure to coordinate a soil and water conservation program is presently in existence.

5. Having the local board identify critical resource problem areas, set priorities for such action and develop the local conservation program.

We are opposed to this aspect. "Local Board" as referred to is the County Committee described in number four and not the Soil and Water Conservation District. We feel the existing Soil and Water Conservation Districts already have this responsibility and are effectively performing this function.

6. Providing for a State Conservation Coordinating Board, appointed by the Governor, that identifies state critical problem areas, sets priorities, and develops the state conservation program.

We strongly oppose this feature. The Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission already has this responsibility and authority under state law to perform the proposed functions of this board. The creation of such a board would amount to a bureaucracy that would impede the effectiveness of developing and carrying out a state soil and water conservation program.

7. Establishing a USDA National Conservation Board which advises the Secretary of Agriculture.

We oppose this because it would create an entity that would breed disagreement rather than cooperation as proven by the former RCA Coordinating Committee.

8. Basing cooperative actions on an agreement between each Governor and the Secretary of Agriculture.

We oppose this because it would by-pass the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation District Law and take the control of conservation programs out of the hands of local people.

9. Providing closer cooperation and budget coordination among USDA agencies with conservation program responsibilities.

We support this, however, we feel that this can be accomplished without the Committee System described in the preferred program.

10. Targeting more USDA funds and personnel to areas where erosion or other conditions threaten the productive capacity of soil and water resources.

We strongly oppose this feature. Funds for targeted areas would be obtained by reducing the funding of USDA basic soil and water conservation program which is presently inadequately funded. It would reduce and in many cases eliminate technical and financial assistance to many soil and water conservation districts. Under present programs, the agencies, organizations, etc., have the authority to target assistance to critical areas where soil erosion and resource problems exist.

11. Emphasizing the conservation measures that are most cost-efficient in reducing erosion.

We support the idea that conservation measures should be cost-efficient. However, we strongly oppose the idea that all conservation measures in a conservation program must be cost-efficient. Some non-cost-efficient measures such as parallel terracing must be applied if soil erosion is to be adequately funded. This in part justifies the need for federal cost-sharing assistance.

12. Evaluating tax incentives as an inducement to increase use of conservation systems.

We feel that this should be supported because of the possibility of more farmers installing these conservation practices, therefore reducing erosion.

13. Emphasizing USDA assistance to farmers and ranchers for planning and installing conservation systems.

We strongly support this feature. This must be the primary objective of a conservation program.

14. Targeting USDA Research and Education services toward conservation problems that impair agricultural productivity.

We support this because we feel that conservation and productivity are tied together.

15. Setting up pilot projects to test new conservation methods.

We oppose this feature. We would support it if additional needed funds were provided rather than being obtained by reducing present conservation program funds.

16. Requiring land owners to have a conservation plan in order to be eligible for Farmers Home Administration loans.

We oppose this because this is a form of cross-compliance which is not compatible with a voluntary conservation program.

17. Evaluating and analyzing conservation progress.

We support this feature. Progress must be evaluated on a long term basis.

18. Minimizing conflicts among features of USDA farm programs that limit achievement of conservation objectives.

We support this feature. We agree that one USDA farm program should not conflict with, or adversely affect another program.

19. Strengthening data collection and analysis for identifying conservation problems.

Support—This work should be carried out by already existing units of government that have the capability.

20. Expanding the use of long term agreements between USDA and farmers or ranchers.

We support this because this has proven to be an excellent approach for getting conservation on the ground.

D. OVERALL REACTION

Preferred Program strongly oppose:

Alternative No. 1—Support.

Alternative No. 2—Support.

We feel that we must strongly oppose the preferred program because the Committee System that it is recommending would destroy the entire conservation effort. Districts have worked over forty years to develop local, state and federal relationships through state laws that establish soil and water conservation districts. We feel that this constitutes the best system, yet devised to deliver conservation resources to the problem areas, farms and farmers. We feel that we are in favor of maintaining and improving the current system. The non-productive programs should be eliminated and existing productive programs should be made for additional funding above that needed to maintain a base program in each district, to target the critical problem areas, however, neither alternative No. 1 or alternative No. 2 accomplish this, but it is felt that a combination of the two with some modifications and adequate funding would result in an acceptable program.

STATEMENT OF ROBROY FISHER, ON BEHALF OF DELTA COUNCIL, STONEVILLE, MISS.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our views on Soil and Water Conservation issues which are of concern to our area and State. Thank you very much for interrupting your busy schedules to meet with us here in Mississippi.

My name is Robroy Fisher. I am a farmer from Washington County, Mississippi. I am here today as spokesman for Delta Council, an organization representing the 18 Delta and part-Delta counties of Mississippi. I have been actively involved in soil conservation work for many years. I have served as a Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner for Washington County and I have served as chairman of the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission and as president of the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts. I am a past president of Delta Council and am currently serving as a director and as chairman of the Advisory Research Committee.

Soil and water conservation represents an area in which Delta Council has been very active over the entire history of the organization. Work in these fields is coordinated primarily through two of Delta Council's major committees—the Soil Conservation Committee and the Water Resources Committee. Activities are closely coordinated with the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission, with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in our area and with the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts.

The United States Department of Agriculture has published its Final Program Report and Environmental Impact Statement which comprises the "National Program for Soil and Water Conservation." While there are portions of this report that we strongly support, there are other areas that are cause for concern.

As you will recall, our present soil and water conservation plan was initiated back in the 1930s and provides for flexible programs based on the voluntary cooperation of land users. It depends upon a mixture of local, State and federal activities with conservation objectives determined by local Conservation District and Farmer Committees. This program has worked well throughout the years and we strongly support the continuation of this approach with strong emphasis on coordination of program planning and evaluation. We oppose federal centralization of program development and operation.

The Soil and Water Resource Conservation Act that was passed by the Congress in 1977 required the Secretary of Agriculture to appraise the condition of our soil and water resources on rural, non-federal land (an area representing approximately two-thirds of American's total land area) and directed the Secretary to develop, in consultation with the American public, a national Soil and Water Conservation Program to insure the sustained productivity of soil, water and related resources. In carrying out these responsibilities, the USDA conducted thousands of public meetings to solicit views on resource problems and how to solve them. A commercial firm was hired to carry out a public opinion survey for the Department. This survey attempted to measure attitudes toward various conservation objectives and programs. In 1980, the USDA sought public comments on alternative ways of developing conservation programs. Nearly 65,000 responses were received by the USDA containing more than 1.5 million separate comments. After consideration of these comments, the USDA prepared a "Preferred Program" and two alternative programs. These three programs were then presented for public review.

Alternative 1 would continue current trends—including funding trends—in USDA conservation programs. Alternative 2 would redirect these programs to target a larger share of USDA assistance to areas with critical resource problems. The "Preferred Program" would use "Targeting of Critical Areas" as well as "Block Grants" to states to "encourage" local and state governments to increase their roles in planning and carrying out conservation programs.

The USDA received approximately 83,000 responses containing more than 1.7 million comments relating to these three alternative programs. A majority of the people commenting indicated strong support for Alternative 1 and opposition for Alternative 2 and the "Preferred Program". Responses received in the State of Mississippi showed that more than 80 percent of those responding opposed the "Preferred Program."

I cited the results of these surveys that were conducted by the USDA to illustrate the concern and opposition of farmers throughout the Nation to portions of the "Preferred Program". Of particular concern were strategies that would have required farmers to apply conservation measures in accordance with USDA standards before they could qualify for benefits under other USDA programs such as commodity price supports, low interest rate loans, cost-sharing and crop insurance. Strong opposition was voiced to the adoption of this cross compliance feature.

Strong opposition was also voiced to the plan for providing "Block Grants" to states that would have to be matched by the State funds to carry out needed soil and water conservation programs. Farmers in Mississippi and throughout the Nation were also opposed to the redirection of programs to target a large share of USDA assistance to areas with critical resource problems.

This does not mean that Mississippi farmers oppose recognition of the need for extra efforts in areas with critical problems. Indeed, there should be extra efforts and additional funding should be made available to meet these problems. The fact is, however, that funding for work in these target areas would be at the expense of other important projects for which support would be greatly reduced. Also, the plan calls for an increase in the percentage of funds targeted each year from five percent the first year to 25 percent in the fifth year. Unless additional funding is provided for work in these targeted areas, this would mean that 25 percent of currently available resources would be used in targeted areas. The level of support for program in non-target areas would be greatly reduced.

For the past several years, there have been annual decreases in total funds allocated to the Soil Conservation Service to carry out soil and water conservation programs in Mississippi. The work force in Mississippi has declined more than 22 percent since 1978—from 542 employees to 425 employees in 1981. We simply cannot continue to provide the type and amount of conservation assistance needed with this continuing drain in resources. In a recent year, assistance was provided to 37,498 landowners in planning and carrying out proper conservation treatment on their land. Many more landowners needed assistance and would have been willing to apply conservation work at their own expense if adequate technical assistance had been available through the Soil Conservation Service.

Up to the present time, the Soil Conservation Service has been able to minimize the impact of these reductions primarily by reducing the total number of staff years, cutting travel to a minimum and reducing funds expended for training and the purchase of equipment. Further reductions in funding will, in our opinion, make it impossible for the Soil Conservation Service in Mississippi, to carry out a soil and water conservation program at anywhere near an effective level. Also, the greatest impact of these budget reductions has been in the water resources projects area which is of great importance to Mississippi farmers.

We wish to commend the Secretary for focusing Nation-wide attention on the need for action to minimize the loss of soil resources from wind and water erosion. This, together with programs to help farmers to more effectively utilize and conserve water resources represent what we believe to be our most important conservation needs.

We believe that we can deal with these needs more effectively through a program that is closely aligned to the soil and water conservation plan that we have been using for so many years. This plan provides for flexible programs based on voluntary cooperation of land users. The effectiveness of this plan has been proven and the greatest need is for a realistic level of support.

In closing, I would like to call attention to what we believe to be one of the principal causes of the increase in soil erosion that has occurred in recent years. Beginning with the Agricultural Act 1973 and fueled by the "World Food Crisis," farmers were encouraged to increase production to fill the demands of rapidly expanding export markets. Consequently, harvested cropland increased from 289 million acres in 1972 to 353 million acres in 1981. A high proportion of these acres were converted from pasture and grazing land, a great deal of which is moderately to severely sloping. The use of such land for row crop production has resulted in the more rapid loss of soil from erosion.

Downturns in demand brought about by world-wide recessionary factors and prospects for a slow economic recovery clearly indicate the need for action to deal with this problem. We believe that one of the most effective answers would be a land retirement program designed to help control production, improve future soil fertility and minimize the loss of topsoil from water and wind erosion. There will certainly be a need for a larger cropland base in the years ahead and public interests will be served by maintaining these excess acres in a state of readiness.

Also, the cost of an effective land retirement program will be less than the expense of continued overproduction with resulting surplus supplies that depress market prices to lower and lower levels. We respectfully urge that a long-range land retirement program to deal with this excess acreage be given serious consideration by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

STATEMENT OF L. A. DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT, MISSISSIPPI AMERICAN AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT

Mr. Chairman, my name is L. A. Davidson. I am President of the Mississippi American Agriculture Movement. My active farming experience covers 50 years and my technical soil and economic research covers the South for 40 years. I completed two years of graduate research and received a Master of Science degree in Agronomy, Soil Science section, at the University of Tennessee over 40 years ago. My work and observations in Soil Survey and Classification Research work have indicated that we are now destroying our soils at double the rate of 20 years ago. We are unnecessarily repeating the historic processes of thousands of years that Dr. W. C. Loudermilk studied, tabulated and warned us about in the late 30's.

MXs do not replace food. Roman swords were ineffective when the soil of their granary was eroded. The Romans saved 28 volumes of agricultural treatises covering the world's known soil and water conservation knowledge when they destroyed Carthage in 146 B.C. However, their granary soils lost even their subsoil horizons and after nearly 2,000 years, nature has not begun to replace it.

When you refuse to learn from the past, you drastically limit your future. The U.S. Government has ignored history and very severely limited its future.

Nearly 50 years ago, a Secretary of Agriculture, referring to the existing agricultural practices and resulting erosion said, "This terribly destructive process is excusable in a young civilization. It is not excusable in the United States in the year 1938. We know what can be done and we are beginning to do it. The public is waking up, and just in time, In another 30 years, it might have been too late."

We would submit that the public and government were aroused, but not wakened, and that it is now too late for hundreds of thousands of acres of land. Scientists proved long ago what observant farmers have always known, namely, the rate of erosion increases as the upper layers of soil are successively removed. Most of the non-sandy U.S. cropland with a slope of more than 5 percent has no original topsoil at this moment.

The 1938 Yearbook of Agriculture, "Soils and Men" contains all of the information needed then and now to conserve our soil, water and farmer resources. All are necessary and all are being destroyed. The Budget Director, the Secretary of State, the President and all of Congress would be well advised to read the first chapter of the book that has had the solution for 45 years.

Most of the good horses have left the barn, but you gentlemen are neglecting your greastest obligation if you do not close the barn gate and preserve the remnants of our soil, water and farmers. The destruction rate of all is accelerating each year, and we are in the last quarter. We have destroyed 300 million acres of our original 500 million acres of productive land.

The financial resources of farmers have been destroyed along with the soil and water. The present $220 billion U.S. farm debt very effectively keeps individual farmers from paying for conservation efforts. At the present failure rate, a large part of the farmers in the South will not be able to obtain production loans next year, much less assume conservation expenses. Furthermore, the farmer's interest, pride and desire to care for the nation's resources have been destroyed by Government tactics, attitudes and policies. There is no incentive to go the necessary extra mile when your government is denying you the opportunity to make a profit.

In the early 70's, Secretary of Agriculture Butz accelerated the destructive process when he forced production "fence row to fence row". Since then, the government policies have ignored the economic and soil and water conservation lessons of the last 7,000 years.

Southern states cannot contribute additional money or personnel because property taxes are at the point of confiscation and all other sources are fully covered. Many states will finish their current year with a deficit.

As more private farm operations fail, conglomerate acquisition of the remaining prime farm land will result in owners that can use tax write-offs to pay for conservation expenses, but the government will lose tax revenue in equal amounts and local and state revenues will fall as private ownership declines.

As tenancy increases and larger equipment becomes necessary to attain lower production costs, conservation compliance will be more difficult to obtain. Historically the smaller, owner-operated farms have usually followed the best conservation practices. In the South, satisfactory tenant compliance is unusual.

In order to properly use and effectively presesrve the remnant of our resources for future generations, we see no viable alternative to Federal Government supported programs patterned after the very successful ones of the 30's and 40's. Erosion control should be given priority status and receive major emphasis. Adequate know-how is presently available to start intensive implementation.

For the above reasons reflecting basic research, supported by lessons of history, both ancient and recent, the American Agriculture Movement recommends that:

1. The Secretary's preferred program, alternative 3, page 25 of the 1982 RCA Final Program Report be rejected as completely unworkable.
2. Alternative 2, page 25, be approved and implemented in a crash program which is long overdue.
3. The 1983 Federal funding level be doubled for 1984 and adjusted upward after that.
4. The present rules, regulations and U.S.D.A. implementation procedures be retained.
5. TVA's warning on page 62 of the 1982 RCA Final Report be given serious consideration. We quote: "Nothing less than a serious national effort to deal with such (erosion) problems will be sufficient to maintain this nation's vital agricultural base and protect water quality."

Gentlemen, in the South, we need no studies, surveys or new GAO methodology. Most of the topsoil is gone or rapidly leaving and much of the subsoil has already blocked the flood basins, stream beds and valleys. We need a viable, long range balanced farm program that will provide farmers an opportunity to feed their families as well as the rest of the country. They may then be in a position to join with the Government and reduce destruction that will otherwise destroy us.

Thank you for permitting us to present this information.

STATEMENT OF HUGH M. ARANT, PRESIDENT, MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, RULEVILLE, MISS.

I am Hugh M. Arant, a farmer from Ruleville, Mississippi, and president of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. The Mississippi Farm Bureau is a volunteer organization of more than 145,000 families. The vast majority of our members are farmers.

Our membership has taken strong positions in favor of controlling soil erosion, improving water quality and protecting our ground water resources. Our livelihood depends on maintaining and improving these resources. In fact, our Nation's ability to feed itself and much of the rest of the world depends on how much we and our Nation's leaders are committed to the task of preserving the quality and quantity of our soil and water.

The Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act is one indication that the leadership of this Nation and the U.S.D.A. recognize that we cannot ignore the fact that we are slowly losing our ability to produce an adequate supply of food and fiber for future generations.

Senator Cochran and Senator Jepsen, I commend you, your colleagues in Congress and the USDA on what I consider a giant step for soil and water conservation.

There are several specific areas I would like to address concerning the Resources Conservation Act:

1. Will this national program adequately address the needs in Mississippi for the next five years? Provided it is adequately funded.
2. Should the States be assuming more of a role in conservation treatment? Certainly, and the State's cost sharing should be in kind payments by paying salaries

for more technical personnel. But considering present economic conditions, I do not envision any additional State funding for conservation efforts.

3. Is the proposed national funding level adequate? No, not at this level. We have identified and recommended a five-year program, but have funded it at around 50 percent of the money needed to carry it out. The cost share funds should be doubled.

4. What are the priorities of conservation work needed in Mississippi? (a) Reduce excessive soil erosion by helping landowners apply and maintain conservation systems on agricultural lands that are now eroding excessively; (b) reduce upstream flood damage through structural and non-structural methods—with emphasis on non-structural methods; and (c) improve water quality by applying knowledge through determining the relationship between soil erosion and water pollution.

5. Are conservation efforts keeping up with today's needs in Mississippi? Definitely not. For years it appeared that we were winning the battle against erosion. But higher prices being paid for soybeans back in the '70's caused thousands of acres that were protected by forest or by pasture were plowed up for soybean production. Almost over night erosion once again took its toll of thousands of acres. In many areas of this state this condition still exists.

6. Will targeting help achieve more conservation in Mississippi? Definitely. Targeting is getting assistance to critical areas where it is needed most. Targeting funds are adequate at this time.

7. Are the six long term objectives set at USDA in line with needs? Yes. They are aimed at maintaining and improving resource productivity. They are objectives that all of us in agriculture should strive to attain.

8. Are ongoing conservation efforts in Mississippi effective? I will give you a qualified yes for that answer. They are effective only when farmers are convinced by some sort of educational program that a conservation system will not cost more than they can afford to pay; that conservation efforts will improve net farm income and that these efforts are for the good of all their neighbors.

9. Should USDA put any constraints on other USDA programs that tend to create erosion problems? Certainly it would not be beyond reason to expect FmHA borrowers to be required to have a farm conservation plan. But economics should determine when certain portions of a conservation system should be installed.

10. Is water quality, forestry, and other resources like wetlands receiving enough emphasis? If we accomplish all of the other objectives set forth by the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act, the major recipients of the benefits of the program will be water quality, forestry, wetlands and wild life.

I have only given you a brief overview of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation's position as it relates to RCA.

You are well aware that our State is losing an average of 10.6 tons of soil per acre per year from cropland. I cannot place enough emphasis on the seriousness of this problem. Through the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act, we hope to turn this situation around.

My detaileld statement for the record will be mailed to each of you next week. Thank you for your concern for the problems we have as farmers. And thank you for inviting us to present our views.

STATEMENT OF A. T. "GUS" EVANS, NOXUBEE COUNTY, MISS.

I am A. T. "Gus" Evans, farmer and businessman from Noxubee County. I appreciate the opportunity to appear at this hearing and make a statement about the soil and water conservation program that has been developed in compliance with the Resources Conservation Act, Public Law 95-192.

It is my understanding that this is the first national soil and water conservation program. It is a good beginning. I hope that the program development process will continue so that the needed changes will be made in order that conservation, development and protection of our soil and water resources can more adequately and efficiently be accomplished.

I do not feel that need to stress the importance of the conservation of our soil and water resources to the members of this committee. I know that you realize that the future prosperity of this Nation depends to a large extent upon the availability of both quality and quantity of these resources. I do want to talk for a few minutes about our situation in Mississippi as related to soil and water conservation.

Each year there are thousands of acres of good agricultural land being put into irreversible uses such as urban and urban build-up and highways. There are about 120 million tons of soil eroded in the State each year. Much of this is being washed off the land into stream systems of the State which is lost from production forever.

There are hundreds of thousands of acres of land that have eroded so badly that it can no longer be used for agricultural production. It is a fact that erosion has decreased the productive capacity of much of the hill land that is used for agriculture. It has been estimated that about two-thirds of the soil on hill cropland has been lost by erosion. In Mississippi, the average annual soil loss from cropland exceeds 10 tons per acre per year. This is the third highest in the Nation. Because we are losing both quantity and quality of our resources and because there will be increasing demands upon these resources, it is apparent to me that the fuse is burning at both ends and we are on a course of self destruction unless needed action is taken immediately.

Since there have been efforts to conserve our soil and water resources for about 40 years, it is difficult for the public to understand why we have such a big conservation problem today. Of course there are many reasons for this. Up until this time, there has not been a national soil and water conservation program and the Federal Government has not been consistent in its agricultural policies. You will recall that only a few years ago the farmers were encouraged to grow crops or plow the land from fence row to fence row. Another reason is that the farmers have been in a real economic squeeze in the last several years. The cost of production has increased while the economic returns have decreased. Farmers have been forced to maximize production by expanding their operations. This has resulted in a lot of land that was once protected by vegetative cover being plowed up and put into row crops. Much of this land was unsuited for row crop production, and much of it did not have the conservation treatment applied that was needed to protect it from erosion. I believe that most farmers would like to protect their land but simply do not have the funds needed to apply the conservation treatment.

It is very important that it be recognized that the responsibility for soil and water conservation does not rest entirely upon the individuals that till the land. It is the responsibility of every American because the funds invested in conservation will primarily benefit society and future generations. According to a nationwide survey that we made in 1979, the majority of the people surveyed fully support the Federal Government sharing the cost of a soil and water conservation program. An increase in Federal funds is essential to implement the needed soil and water conservation program.

In addition to cost sharing funds, the farmer must have technical assistance available to help him plan and apply a conservation program on his farm. The Soil Conservation Service is the primary agency in the United States Department of Agriculture that provides such assistance. Since 1976 the total personnel employed by the Soil Conservation Service has reduced by 140. This is very unfortunate since we have farmers all over Mississippi who are ready to do conservation work but do not have the technical assistance available to help them.

With this by way of background, I will comment on a few specific features of the RCA soil and water conservation program. It is important to note that 86 percent of the public response in Mississippi supported the continuation of the current program. The public support and opposition of the 20 features of the program were divided about equal. This pretty well expresses my opinion about the program which is to say that some of the features are desirable and some changes are needed in others.

One of the features that I do not agree with is the targeting of funds to designated areas. I agree that the first priority should be given to erosion control in Mississippi; however, there is an erosion problem in each soil and water conservation district (county) in the State. As I have previously indicated, the funds for financial and technical assistance to farmers are much less than needed to get the conservation job done. It really doesn't make any difference whether there are 50,000 acres or 10,000 acres of severely eroding cropland in a county if only a small portion can be adequately treated annually with present assistance available. As long as there is a workload in a county, it doesn't seem reasonable to decrease assistance just because there is more work to be done in another area. Let me use by own county of Noxubee as an example. The average annual soil loss for cropland in my county is about average for the State. It is not presently in a proposed targeted area, yet we could use two or three times more financial and technical assistance to treat the erosion problems that we are now receiving. As I understand it, Congress has not appropriated money for targeted areas; however, money is being allocated for this purpose. I understand the amount will continue to increase until about 25 percent of the technical and financial assistance funds of the SCS and the ASCS will go to targeted areas. With the present economic conditions, I see no way for this to be done without adversely affecting the overall basic level of assistance for conservation work in much of the State. I hope that this committee will give serious consideration to making adjustments in this particular feature of the program.

The second feature that I do not agree with is that of providing Federal matching block grants to States. As you probably know, the State of Mississippi is in very bad economic condition. In view of this situation, I do not believe that the State will be willing and able to come up with its matching funds. This being true, it would mean that funds would be allocated to other States that can provide the necessary State funds and which would result in reducing the total funds allocated to Mississippi. There appears to be widespread opinion that States can and do administer the use of funds in a more efficient manner. In this case, I do not believe that this is true. There is already a very good delivery system through the ASCS and SCS to assist in developing and carrying out a soil and water conservation program at the local district level. In keeping with the public response to this feature which was opposed by 85 percent, I recommend that this feature be reconsidered and funds provided through the present agencies and organizations.

There is one other feature about the program on which I will make a comment. This relates to the requirement that an applicant for a farmer-ownership loan or soil and water conservation loan to have or to request a conservation plan for the land on which the loan is to be used. I subscribe to the principle of this requirement. If it could be carried out, it would certainly contribute to the conservation of our soil and water resources. The point that I want to make is that the Soil Conservation Service is operating under a heavy workload with limited personnel. If this additional work is performed, it is essential that the Soil Conservation Service be provided additional funds for personnel services. Otherwise this feature on the program should be reconsidered.

Obviously I have not attempted to comment about all aspects of the RCA soil and water conservation program. I chose to limit my specific comments to those features that I felt like needed your attention the greatest. I would appreciate your considering these as the program development process proceeds.

Again, let me say that I really appreciate the opportunity to appear at this hearing.

STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE JIMMY MARTIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE, LOUISIANA STATE LEGISLATURE

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee, I am Jimmy Martin, member of the Louisiana State Legislature House of Representatives. I also serve as Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee in the State Legislature. I, along with my colleague, Mr. Odom, have a deep vested interest in the well-being of agriculture in the great state of Louisiana.

The Louisiana Legislature is currently in session; however, I considered this hearing and the issues facing us concerning soil and water conservation of importance sufficient to take a few hours and appear before you today.

The protection of our resource base in Louisiana is essential not only to the State but to the nation as well. Louisiana has some of the most varied and valuable soil and water resources of any state in the Union.

Our state topography ranges from heavy timber producing areas in the rolling hills of the northern part of the state, to rich alluvial flood plains of the major river traversing the state; to the large gulf coastal marsh areas in the southern part of the state.

These wide ranges of natural resources provide many opportunities for agriculture production; however, they also involve a complex management programs.

I wish to discuss with you today one of these resource areas that is not served by the RCA program document, that is, our gulf coastal marsh area. This area comprises about 3.2 million acres spanning from the west side of the state to the east boundary, covering the entire southern end of the state.

The wetlands of Louisiana support a commercial and sports fishing and hunting industry valued in the millions of dollars annually. Shrimp and menhaden, estuarine-dependent species comprising over ninety-five percent of commercial fishery yields in Louisiana, accounted for just less than $200 million at dockside in 1978, or over $3.25 billion after processing. Sports fishing represented a value of $76 million in 1975, figures which in 1981 dollars would approach in excess of $100 million.

Shrimp and menhaden yields have been directly correlated to the area of wetlands. In studies for the LSU Center for Wetland Resources, R. E. Turner established that "higher yields (of shrimp) are associated with larger areas of wetlands". M. H. Cavit, in work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, similarly established that yields for menhaden increase as do the ratio of marsh to open water. Thus, it is evident that continued loss of wetland marshes could lead not only to serious declines in fishery resources but also greatly diminished state, and national, revenues.

Statistical analyses have indicated that the maximum sustainable yield of shrimp is or already has been approached; menhaden similarly. If the one percent rate of marsh loss per year which has been experienced over the past twenty years were to be continued until the year 2000, it is projected in preliminary figures that the commercial fisheries could decline by about 169 million pounds annually, representing a loss of $13.6 million per year at 1973 dockside prices.

Wildlife, like fishery resources, are endangered by wetland deterioration and loss. The value of pelts harvested during the 1976-1977 season, primarily from coastal marshes, exceeded $10 million. Over two-thirds of the state's fur harvest derives from nutria whose productivity is highest in fresh marsh, lowest in salt marsh. As salt water continues to invade fresh and intermediate marshes, a serious decline in fur harvest can be expected. A similar situation exists for the alligator population which thrives best in fresh to intermediate marshes. Expanding saltwater intrusion can be expected to damage a promising revival of the alligator industry which in 1980 contributed $2 million to the local economy.

The area produced over 22 percent of the total fisheries in the United States in 1981. This contributed about $900 million annually to Louisiana's revenue.

Approximately $18 million annually, are received from fur production.

Over 14,300 alligators were trapped in 1980-81 season with a cash value of $1.7 million.

The gulf coastal area is the primary wintering ground for migratory fowl using the Mississippi flyway.

My purpose in singling out this resource area is its vast importance to the agricultural economy of the state and nation. The major problem is the rapid deterioration of the marsh area through soil erosion. Approximately 39 square miles of marsh are lost annually. This loss manifests itself in the conversion to open water. The most alarming aspect of this change is, unlike cropland erosion which has some redeeming values, once the marsh is gone there is no recovery.

Please allow me to further demonstrate this concern by showing some slides of the area. I will move through these rapidly in view of the time.[1]

Slide 1.—The State of Louisiana fisheries industry produces more tonnage of commercial fish than any other state in the nation, in excess of 1½ billion pounds. The estuaries of Louisiana are an important nursery area for shrimp which are produced at a current level of over 1 billion pounds annually.

Slide 2.— The oyster industry in our State accounts for 40-50 percent of the total U.S. oyster production.

Slide 3.—The American alligator, once an endangered species, is currently at population levels such that it is commercially harvested. Approximately 80 percent of the total U.S. production of alligators is harvested in Louisiana.

Slide 4.—The coastal area of our state leads not only the nation but the North American continent in the production of fur.

Slide 5.—The trapping industry in Louisiana accounts for almost $20 million annually.

Slide 6.—Louisiana has long been known for its major migratory waterfowl hunting.

Slide 7.—The salt marshes and brackish marshes of our state are major wintering areas for over 400,000 geese on an annual basis.

Slide 8.—Our fresh and intermediate marshes are the wintering grounds for over 4½ million ducks each year.

Slide 9.—The livestock industry in the marsh country is of major significance. Approximately half of the area is currently grazed.

Slide 10.—We also use our coastal area for recreation and for industrial purposes.

Slide 11.—However, these uses are not always without some drawbacks. Navigation canals such as this one have led to the introduction of saltwater into previously freshmarsh and swamp areas. Large areas such as the cypress swamp in the background have been killed by saltwater intrusion.

Slide 12.—Our use of transportation corridors such as this road have led to the disruption of the natural flow of water. In some cases drowning portions of the marsh and in other areas accelerating saltwater intrusion.

Slide 13.—Improved navigation outlets on many of our natural tributaries have led to saltwater intrusion.

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[1] See pp. 46-63 for the slides referred to above.

Slide 14.—Our quest for flood-free homesities has led us to levee-off many areas, including the major levee projects on the mighty Mississippi River. These levee systems have also affected the natural water regime of our coastal area and have disrupted the sediment recharge needed to replenish our marshes.

Slide 15.—Many areas of Louisiana's marsh are accessible only by canals. Canals are built for transportation, as well as, mineral exploration. These canals also have the potential for bringing saltwater into previously freshmarsh areas. The vegetation in these areas cannot withstand the salinity and the vegetation soon dies out, usually to be replaced by open water.

Slide 16.—Man is not the only problem in the loss of much of our coastal area. Natural streams such as this one change their course as they have been doing over billions of years altering water and sediment flow in the marsh.

Slide 17.—But the end result, both natural and man-made, is approximately 40 square miles of Louisiana lost to open water on an annual basis.

Slide 18.—Things can be done to improve this situation. Shoreline planting, such as this on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, using adapted plants which have salt tolerance——

Slide 19.—Can be used to provide vegetative barriers to still wave action.

Slide 20.—Our barrier islands are unique geological forms as well as a major protector of our marsh. They help to still the Gulf of Mexico's tides and protect the inland marshes.

Slide 21.—Stabilization of the dunes on the islands is necessary to maintain the barriers.

Slide 22.—They can be successfully vegetated as shown here. In March of 1981, a group of local, state, and federal agencies joined together to look at problems on the Louisiana coastline.

Slide 23.—Included in this group were vegetative specialists, taking a strong look at what plants were adaptable and what problems could be solved with plants;

Slide 24.—Soil scientists, looking at the soil resources and what the major soil related problems were;

Slide 25.—Structures designed to keep saltwater out of the marshes.

Slide 26.—The group looked at the livestock industry and what was needed by this group of resource managers.

Slide 27.—On the barrier islands the group took special note of some of the erosion problems involved, as this is a major resource fast diminishing. As a result of this tour,

Slide 28.—A beach erosion project was instituted and during the summer of 1981.

Slide 29.—Sand fences were installed and vegetative materials were established in this area.

Slide 30.—By October of 1981, dune stabilization and dune building was already underway.

Slide 31.—Our organic marshes have problems of their own. This area was at one time a freshmarsh. Saltwater intrusion via navigation canal has led to the loss of the plant community in this area. Salt-tolerant plants have been introduced into this area to try to reclaim the area to vegetation.

Slide 32.—With current knowledge these introductions of plant materials must be done manually with vegetative material. A need exists to find ways to seed these areas, either mechanically or by air.

Slide 33.—In the southwest part of our state, Calcasieu Lake is an example of a major shoreline erosion problem. This lake shore has been estimated to be eroding at a rate of 10–12 feet annually.

I call you special attention to these last three slides. These illustrate most vividly the dramatic loss of marsh land occurring.

Slide 34.—This is an aerial picture of Lafourche Parish in 1945, 320 square miles. Please note the large amount of green representing marsh area.

Slide 35.—Now let's look at the same area 10 years later. Some loss, but not to bad.

Slide 36.—Now let's look at the same area 25 years later. You can see the large increase in blue which represents a loss of marsh.

I hope this group of slides shows you that coastal erosion problems in Louisiana are not only Louisiana's problem but those of the nation as a whole. We have not been idly sitting by while this resource has been deteriorating. In 1978 the state began operation of its coastal resources management program. This program operates in concert with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Section 404 Permit Program for dredge and fill activities. In 1981, the Louisiana legislature established a $35 million Coastal Environmental Protection trust fund to be used for projects to protect and improve the coastal areas. Since the 1940's the Soil Conservation Service and local soil and water conservation districts have provided technical assistance to marsh landowners to plan and implement conservation programs on their lands. Local units of government are currently developing coastal management plans to act as guides in the future development and protection of our coastal marshes. Interagency groups as well as groups of landowners working together are attempting to find solutions to the problems in our area. Foremost, is a need for technical assistance in developing and implementing multi-resource management plans.

You may be asking what has this to do with the RCA plan? Currently the greatest need in the marsh parishes is to accelerate the technical assistance available through the Soil Conservation Service and the local soil and water conservation districts to reduce soil erosion in this area. The RCA program document does not include any provisions for targeting funds to this resource problem. Yet erosion is more devastating in this area than on much of the cropland throughout the nation.

Mr. Chairman, the state of Louisiana has made a deep comitment to preserve this area. I come before you today asking for your support to provide federal assistance that will compliment the current commitment of the state. The vegetative and soils expertise contained within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, should be made available for more accelerated technical assistance to address these urgent needs. I see that the U.S. House of Representative has approved over 600 million dollars for development of the MX missile. This dwarfs the total economic impact that would result from the recommendations being made here today. I support a strong defense, however I also support a strong agricultural resource base.

Statement of Marion Sanders, Chairman, Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee

Mr. Chairman and Senator Cochran, it is a pleasure for me to appear before you to provide Alabama's views on USDA's National Soil and Water Conservation Program. I am Marion Sanders, a farmer from Coffee County, Alabama. I am also a Conservation District Supervisor and Chairman of the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee. I appear before you as a concerned conservationist and head of the agency charged under law to provide leadership in carrying out soil and water conservation programs in Alabama.

This committee and each of the 67 soil and water conservation districts in Alabama actively participated in development of the National program. We held public meetings and commented on draft documents from the very inception of the process. Over 1,450 Alabamians commented on the draft Program in January 1982.

We recommended several changes in the draft Program and are pleased that they were accepted by the Secretary. We generally support most features of the Program. We recognize in Alabama that serious soil erosion on cropland is our most serious conservation problem and we strongly support the concept of targeting as an efficient way of maximizing the limited resource dollars we have to protect our land base. We do not support the present action of taking funds from existing programs and redirecting them to targeted areas. We need new funds for soil conservation. Why, if protection of our soil resources is essential to our long term survival, is less than .2 of 1 percent of our Federal Budget allocated to this purpose? Comparing budgets we find that $1,555 goes for defense for each conservation dollar. Yet without our massive agriculture machine, we would have national security problems.

How can soil and water conservation be a major issue and receive such a low level of funding? The public opinion survey carried out by pollster Lou Harris under the RCA process revealed that the public is willing to give an appropriate share of its tax dollars to pay a part of the cost to protect the land base on which we and our children depend for food, clothing and shelter. In my opinion, the farmer is paying more than his share of the conservation cost. Farmers are finding it difficult, in these times of economic stress, to use funds for soil conservation. Funds spent on conservation have long term pay back, often times way beyond the time the mortgage payment is due. Mr. Chairman, it is my opinion that an in-depth study by the Department of Agriculture, academia, and Congress is needed to determine the portion of soil and water conservation cost that should be paid by society versus that paid by the farmer. No such in-depth study has ever been carried out.

I would like to address the RCA process. I believe the RCA process has been very effective in accomplishing several things: (1) The nation was provided with sound, scientific information indicating for the first time that our resource base is deteriorating. It brought into focus the fact that we don't know the relationship of erosion on yields, a very key point if we are to sell conservation on factors other than stewardship and persuasion. Some times learning what we don't know is very important. (2) For the first time, we are beginning to coordinate agency efforts to address, in priority order, our soil and water conservation problems. As an example, in Alabama, technical assistance from Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and cost sharing from Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) are now being targeted to severely eroding areas in a coordinated fashion. I do not believe this would have occurred without the RCA process. (3) Data obtained during the RCA process were used in determining the loss of prime agricultural lands.

The Governor of Alabama recently asked our Soil and Water Conservation Committee to develop a long range program for Alabama. We are planning to carry this out in a scientific manner using the latest data and techniques available to determine alternative uses of our land and water resources and the impact of these alternative uses on the state's economy. Many agencies, individuals and organizations have already indicated their interest in helping us develop this long range program. I believe the RCA process has shown us that we need to carry out futuristic studies at national and state levels in order to establish sound policies for long range management of our natural resources. We often times can prevent future costly mistakes with prior planning.

We in Alabama still believe in the voluntary approach to soil and water conservation. An individual has a right to use his land as he sees fit as long as he does not abuse it and destroy its use for future generations. We believe that every individual, if he desires, has a right to enter farming. We don't believe, however, that every individual has a right to use tax dollars for farming unless he or she farms in a conservation manner. We believe that it should be a requirement for an individual receiving government assistance to carry out conservation practices on his or her land. Once the conservation practice is established, it should be the responsibility of the farmer to maintain it. Since the fence row to fence row era of the seventies, we have seen many farmers who owned only a few acres of land borrow large sums of federal money and rent land to farm on.

Many of the problems of soil erosion occur on these rented lands, often times marginal lands, because the renter does not have the incentive to apply conservation. In the Black Belt of Alabama, which has highly erosive Prairie Soils, grass replaced cotton in the 1940's and 50's. In the early seventies, farmers from other states came into Alabama, rented this land for soybean production, mined it and left. The yields on some lands went from 30-40 bushels per acre in the beginning to a present yield of 15-20 bushels per acre. Much of this land today is still in an eroding condition. It is eroding while the landowners and farmers play musical chairs—the landowners looking for another year's rent and the farmer hoping for one more good crop. Unfortunately, neither party has an incentive to plant grass, build fences and return to cattle farming.

I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that tax dollars assisted in establishing these lands to grass and it will again take tax dollars to bring them back into a nondeteriorating condition. How long can this nation condone such actions? I know the issue of land use is very sensitive but it must be addressed.

We in Alabama support the provision of matching grants to state soil and water conservation agencies and are preparing to receive these funds when they are appropriated. State and local governments throughout the Nation are increasing their financial support to soil conservation districts, even though finances are in short supply. This indicates an awareness and concern by these elected officials.

The issue of marginal lands has not been adequately addressed in any of the Department's programs. Farming these marginal lands is often uneconomical, contributes to our present oversupply, and is the greatest single source of cropland erosion. We are conducting in Alabama, with a grant to a conservation district from the Soil Conservation Service, one of three National pilot projects to determine the cost and landowner willingness to convert these lands. This pilot program is provided for in the National program. We support the concept to test new ideas. Many of these lands in the Southeast should be returned to timber and grass. These croplands, if converted, should be counted as base acreage for any future USDA programs.

Mr. Chairman, I find the erosion problem in the South somewhat cyclic. We older farmers say how erosion could destroy our land. Many of our younger farmers missed the dust bowl and cotton era of the South with its devastating impact. These young farmers were taught that straight row farming is the most efficient and that bigger is better. Many are now learning the hard way that attention must be given to the care of their land. How long can we as a nation with half our topsoil already gone continue this cycle of what I call "erosion learning"? Shouldn't soil conservation be stressed more in our education systems which are tax supported?

We as a nation have some tough decisions to make concerning the use of our land. In my opinion, the 3,000 Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout this country stand ready to help make these most important decisions.

I appreciate your allowing me to present this testimony. We welcome you Mr. Cochran to Alabama and would be pleased to have you, Mr. Jepsen, revisit our state.

KENTUCKY HEARING

STATEMENT OF THOMAS E. NEAL, CHAIRMAN, KENTUCKY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Honorable committee members and staff, I am Thomas E. Neal, Chairman of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission. On behalf of the commission I want to thank you for permitting me to give a statement regarding the National Soil and Water Conservation Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Today I would like to put the National Conservation Program in perspective as it relates to a commission which sets policy and provides guidance to Kentucky's state conservation agency. Our commission is also charged with finding and providing resources for Kentucky's 121 Conservation Districts.

The final National Conservation Program has provisions in it to provide grants to conservation districts through state conservation agencies. Our commission and, I believe, most districts support this part of the program. Through this system we could provide technical assistance to districts to intensify our conservation efforts. Our districts are now financially responsible and can manage these funds in a most prudent manner, thus realizing efficient use of these funds. In addition, if they were on a matching basis it would encourage local districts to secure local resources to match the funds. As yet, there has been no funding from the Department of Agriculture for the grants program. Further, we feel that if this is funded the monies should come from additional appropriations rather than from existing programs.

The final program does not mention the protection of our best agricultural land from conversion to other uses. This item was a high priority according to public response made on the preferred program released in 1981. Our commission and conservation districts feel this should be a part of the program. In fact, Kentucky has already enacted legislation which provides for the creation of agricultural districts aimed at protecting our best farmlands. We feel that if the U.S. Department of Agriculture is truly an agricultural agency then it should assist states and local communities in developing state and local programs to protect our best agricultural lands.

The Soil and Water Commission represents all of our conservation districts. The National Conservation Program has two priorities that pertain to our state. They are erosion and upland watershed protection. We have other districts which have conservation problems that do not necessarily fit into these. An example is pollution of our soil from solid waste, mineral extraction, etc. Districts with these problems should be given assistance in solving these natural resource problems.

The final program does omit the state and local coordinating boards. The commission feels this is a step in the right direction as we already have the commission at the state level and conservation districts at the local level charged with this responsibility.

Again, the commission is charged with representing all conservation districts. In targeting of personnel and financial resources to specific areas we are taking resources from other areas and putting them into the so-called critical areas. The commission supports putting resources where problems exist; however, we feel that funds for targeting should be additional appropriations rather than robbing existing programs, for these areas. Another way of looking at it is, we are penalizing some conservation districts for doing a good job.

The commission supports the high bound funding of conservation programs rather than the low bound, as outlined in the National Conservation Program. In the high bound funding we are just staying even in our conservation programs. In low bound, even though the dollars remain constant, we are losing in our conservation efforts due to inflation and increase in the cost of doing business. It is our understanding that the Department of Agriculture has proposed the low bound funding unless you in Congress change their thinking and fund the conservation programs at an adequate level.

I believe this sums up the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission's thinking regarding the National Conservation Program as submitted in 1982. Even though at this time we have surpluses, just how long will they last? To us, it is a good feeling to know that we have the land capability of producing food and fiber in abundance. We also have the responsibility as conservationists, and as citizens, to protect and improve this great resource base. Thank you for your attention.

STATEMENT OF CALVIN KIRACOFE, CHAIRMAN, OHIO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Honorable members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee and respective staff members, I am pleased to represent the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) in making this statement.

The intent to strengthen the conservation partnership by providing matching grants to conservation districts through the state soil conservation agency will provide a valuable financial incentive for conservation districts and state conservation agencies.

Ohio has had a state matching program for matching county appropriations and local donations since 1959. In fiscal year 1983, slightly more than $1 million of state funds were appropriated to match over $2.25 million of local matchable funds. Our new governor has recommended, the Ohio House of Representatives has approved, and the Ohio Senate is currently considering a budget that would increase the state commitment to the partnership by 53 percent or nearly $600,000.

These matching funds have long served to create added incentive for gaining local funds at the soil and water conservation district (SWCD) level. They are designed to enable districts to use the maximum level of decision making in dealing with local resource conservation needs. A majority of districts are expected to use the new funds to employ additional soil conservation technicians, while others have indicated intents to purchase no-till equipment for use with farmers in accelerating land treatment practices through no-tillage demonstration work.

In Ohio, the advent of a USDA matching grants program can be utilized effectively. It may be the most effective approach USDA can take since our districts already have experience in the employment and management of personnel, have the local funding mechanism in place, and are experienced in handling public funds and grant applications.

We can also look back at our first ever experience in handling USDA grant funds as part of the Resource Conservation Act (RCA) process and recognize that many good things happened as a result of that program. There is, however, a problem.

We are disappointed at the lack of commitment by Congress and the administration to fund the matching grants program.

As is reported in the No. 50 response to the public comments on page 60 of the final program report, there was lack of support by the administration to seek funding for the matching block grants provision proposed in the 1981 RCA preferred program report. However, after Congress authorized Section 15.14 a provision for "Matching Grants for Conservation Activities" in the 1981 farm bill, the administration decided it should be funded at $10 million in fiscal year 1983. Then Congress did not appropriate the funds. In the fiscal year 1984 federal budget, the administration did not request an appropriation for matching grants, but the administration did not request an appropriation for matching grants, but the house agricultural budget sub-committee proposed $17 million to initiate the funds. Subsequently, the appropriation language for matching funds was deleted.

Last year, the criteria to be used in implementing the matching grants was developed by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In March 1983, the Commission's Executive Secretary Larry Vance who also serves as President of the National Association of State Conservation Administrators wrote USDA Secretary Block and Ohio Congressmen expressing concern regarding a report that the OMB was holding up the finalization of the matching grants criteria.

On May 20, we received a letter from OMB stating "The President's fiscal year 1984 Budget does not include funding for matching grants for conservation activities. We have advised the Department of Agriculture that the promulgation of rules establishing procedures for distribution of funds for a program for which the Congress has specifically denied funding and which is not included in the President's fiscal year 1984 Budget is inappropriate." (I attach a copy of this correspondence with OMB).

At present, there are no funds, nor a critieria to deal with regarding a program that could be one of USDA's best efforts in strengthening the conservation partnership. Unless resolved, this creates a USDA, OMB cyclical dilemma of no funds, no criteria which can prevent the implementation of a very good program.

Due to this on again-off again approach, Ohio and several counterpart state conservation agencies are unable to formulate a strategy to deal with the matching grants proposal recommended in the final report. We took the initiative as did many of our counterparts to strengthen the state and local funding. Developing state and local funding sources takes time and cannot be dealt with in a few months to react to a federal appropriation. We are now concerned that the funding generated will not be considered as "new" funds eligible for the matching grants.

The Commission's support on matching grants is based on the understanding that the concept will create local and state initiative to supplement ongoing programs; and that the grants will allow flexibility in programs to deal with localized needs and issues.

I also wish to express a strong feeling by the OSWCC regarding the funding source for the matching grants program.

We are oppopsed to having the funding to the ongoing USDA agency programs further reduced by being used as a source for the matching funds program. We have already observed that such a situation occurred when the targeting proposal was initiated.

I encourage your committee members and the Congress to strengthen your committment of funds to the total USDA program. I strongly encourage Congress to appropriate new funds to allow the new programs, such as matching grants, to be funded sufficiently to allow them to be initiated successfully.

I also express a concern in regard to the concept of targeting of USDA programs. A majority of the soils in the midwestern states, upon which intensive corn and soybean production occurs, do not have excessive soil erosion. Yet, the topsoil layer is thin and soil erosion, even at modest rates, can deplete the productivity of the soil over the long term. I believe that it is this large balance of cropland, highly erosive soils mixed in with the less erosive, cropland acres, warrants USDA's primary assistance consideration. It is where cost effective conservation can be practiced. The availability of technical assistance to help farmers make tillage management decisions, site specific erosion control plans, and design water management systems can do much to sustain productive farmland. This is more important than subsidizing the farming of marginal cropland which is highly erosive or droughty.

I recommend you to respect the advisement of the public received during the initial RCA public input meetings and in reaction to the preferred program as it relates to redirection of the USDA program. I feel that only after the base level of assistance to landowners has been adequately strengthened, should USDA emphasize targeting. It is important that USDA apply its currently limited staff and funding programs to the effort of maintaining the productivity of and protection against the conservation of our most productive farmland acres.

National Association of
State Conservation Administrators,
Columbus, Ohio, March 16, 1983.

Hon. John R. Block,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Block: At a recent meeting of the National Association of State Conservation Administrators, I was instructed to express the concern of the executive and administrative officers of state conservation agencies who work with local conservation districts regarding the lack of rules being made available to implement the Matching Grants for Conservation Activities provisions of Subtitle D, Title XV Resource Conservation Activities provisions of Subtitle D, Title XV Resource Conservation, of Public Law 97-98.

As provided in the act, the secretary may "formulate and implement a program for furthering the conservation of soil, water, and related resources through annual grants to local units of government through state soil conservation agencies".

On February 22, 1982, Association President, Stanley Head, wrote you appointing a three-member committee representing our group to work with your staff regarding the development of this program. We have provided input twice as a committee and when possible as individuals during the past year. We worked hard to enable rules to be approved to utilize the funds appropriated for this purpose.

We are aware that on November 17, 1982 that the Soil Conservation Service sent the proposed rules for the grant program to the Office of Management and Budget for comment.

We have been informed that OMB has indefinitely delayed commenting on the proposed rules. This prevents them from being made available for public comment.

The legislative authority intended by Congress is being impeded by this delay in comment by OMB. We also are aware that the House Agriculture Committee has acted in accord with the intent by recommending $15,000,000 to the House Budget Committee for grants.

The potential of technical assistance grants would provide a modest, yet essential mechanism through which local soil and water conservation districts and state soil and water conservation programs can be stimulated to further complement the efforts of the Soil Conservation Service in dealing with serious problems of erosion, water conservation, and flooding.

Local districts and state conservation agencies have experience in staff management and grant administration. The technical assistance grants can be handled in a cost-effective manner and stimulate local funding initiative.

We urge your immediate attention in seeking a timely response from OMB on this issue so that the rules will soon be published for public comment.

Sincerely,

LAWRENCE G. VANCE,
President, NASCA.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,
Washington D.C., May 19, 1983.

Hon. BOB MCEWEN,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN: This is in reply to your letter of April 4, 1983 enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr. Lawrence G. Vance, President of the National Association of State Conservation Administrators, and requesting appropriate information with which to reply to the letter. Mr. Vance requests favorable review of certain draft regulations proposed by the Soil Conservation Service. These regulations would promulgate general procedures for implementing matching grants for conservation activities as authorized by the 1981 Farm Bill.

The President's fiscal year 1983 Budget proposed to initiate a new program of soil and water conservation grants to be targeted to land areas with critical erosion and upstream flooding problems of national significance. The Congress rejected the President's funding proposal for soil and water conservation grants, and increased appropriations above his request for existing conservation programs. The President's fiscal year 1984 Budget does not include funding for matching grants for conservation activities.

We have advised the Department of Agriculture that the promulgation of rules establishing procedures for distribution of funds for a program for which the Congress has specifically denied funding and which is not included in the President's fiscal year 1984 Budget is inappropriate.

We do appreciate receiving the views of Mr. Vance on this matter and will certainly take them into consideration in reviewing the fiscal year 1985 Budget, or at any other time that circumstances warrant reconsideration of funding for conservation matching grants.

I appreciate the opportunity to explain the Administration's position in this matter.

Sincerely,

MIKE HUDSON,
Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs.

STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE G. VANCE, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE CONSERVATION ADMINISTRATORS

Honorable members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee and respective staff members, speaking for the National Association of State Conservation Administrators (NASCA), I wish to commend USDA on its intent to strengthen the conservation partnership with existing local agencies and organizations. The USDA effort to more closely establish objectives, set priorities and coordinate decisionmaking with state and local government will provide an opportunity for better meeting soil and water conservation needs.

Providing the opportunity, however, is not enough. Historically, natural resource conservation programs have been underfunded and understaffed at the federal, state, and local level.

The resource conservation needs that were identified in the inventory phase of the soil and water Resources Conservation Act (RCA) verify the need for an accelerated land treatment program at all levels of government. If the federal government is willing to make the commitment needed to fund an expanded role through targeting and grants, we perceive that the RCA process has been worth the effort.

If the process results in simply redirecting USDA internal priorities and transferring responsibilities to state and local government, but without sufficient funds to deal with the responsibilities, then we perceive that this is a dumping effort by USDA.

At present, after all the effort to gain public input and gain an up to date inventory of our natural resource needs, which has diverted many hours of time away from getting conservation on the land at the local level, the President's budget for all conservation programs administered by USDA proposed a 30 percent reduction in funds compared to the current program. We view this action with discouragement since it comes at a time when an excellent opportunity was at hand to support a significant program increase.

After a thorough review of the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation, I perceive it as a report of a situation, which is broken down in categories of conservation objectives; Redirection; Strengthened Conservation Partnership and improved program management. Beyond the cosmetic approach, it appears to be dealing with symptoms rather than proposing a cure. There are no long rang goals established. There is no strategy for getting from where we are to where we want to be.

Recognizing these shortcomings, there are many favorable results that did occur during the RCA program formulation process:

1. The first ever grant process of transferring USDA dollars to state soil conservation agencies did work. It establishes a precedent for the funding mechanism which can be used again. The RCA grant dollars allowed states and local conservation districts to do things they otherwise would not have done due to fund limitations. Nearly all of Ohio's soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) followed through from the public input meetings and developed comprehensive long range programs to deal with the issues identified. After talking with many counterpart state administrative officers, I find that the conservation districts in their states did likewise.

While working in Iowa, and now in Ohio, I was able to see how the RCA process and some of its funds could be used to develop a statewide plan for action. In Iowa, the "Iowa Soil 2000" strategy set goals to be accomplished.

The Iowa governor and legislature revised the state code by establishing a process and long range goals through which a conservation folder would be developed for each farm unit in the state. A long range program for funding to implement the program was also developed. During the following fiscal biennium, one million dollar annual funding increase was made for the state cost sharing program. The Iowa legislature just passed their budget for the forthcoming biennium and have provided funds to employ an additional 21 soil and water conservation district technicians added an annual 2.9 million dollar budget increase for state cost sharing and initiated a 1 million dollar per year no interest loan program.

In Ohio, representatives of local SWCDs met with an inter-agency group of Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) staff and conservation oriented federal agencies and organizations to formulate a statewide strategy and action program for achieving 10 year goals. This caused a series of events to transpire, which yielded new working agreements and memorandums of understanding to be written with various ODNR divisions, lead to development of a series of special project grants with the Ohio EPA, and stimulated the Ohio Conservation Fund project. The Ohio Conservation Fund project caused interaction between SWCD leaders, farm organizations, and resource management agencies to evaluate alternative strategies for gaining needed funds to attain the 10 year goals. The need for a dedicated revenue was discussed along with innovative financial incentives such as low interest loans, tax credits, and others.

The immediate result, however, has been the effect of the program on the Ohio Legislature. Incoming Governor Celesta proposed a 56 percent increase in state matching funds to districts in his biennium budget. The House approved this increase and the Senate is currently considering the increase. The secondary effect of this increase is that it has stimulated county government to make additional appropriations to districts to earn a greater state matching amount.

After talking with counterparts in other states, I am aware that the RCA process served as the stimulus for increased awareness of need and increased funding in several other states.

2. Another benefit of the RCA process was that the soil and water conservation program became a discussion topic of the National Governors Assocation. This group, as well as many others, formulated positive position statements on the need for an increased commitment ot soil and water resource managment.

The administrative officers are pleased that a high priority has been placed on erosion control and flood prevention. However, there is need for a broader scope in the final report to deal with issues of prime agricultural land conversion which can become a greater limitation in the short run than soil depletion. The issue of off site damage and the water quality impact also needs greater emphasis.

Program flexibility for dealing with specialized needs, such as cropland drainage, livestock waste management, urban development assistance, and other localized needs should not be precluded by the national "one size fits all" program.

STATEMENT OF THURMAN PHARIS, CHAIRMAN, HICKMAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Senator Jepson, Senator Huddleston, ladies and gentlemen: I appreciate your presence, and the opportunity to speak on the serious erosion problem in our area. I'm Thurman Pharis, farmer and Chairman of the Hickman County Conservation District. My county is located in the extreme part of Western Kentucky. The Mississippi River and the State of Missouri are west of us. Tennessee and Illinois are a few miles south and north. In that little tip, it seems that every state from Kentucky to Minnesota wants to send their excess water and soil our way.

Most people think of Kentucky as a state with forest and mountains and bluegrass, but my interest is an eight county area in Western Kentucky called the Jackson Purchase. It has 1½ million acres of some of the most productive land in the United States. Yields from crops range from 200 bushels of corn, 75 bushels of wheat and 60 bushels of soybeans. This is above average, I'll admit, but the potential is there. The trouble is, we have one big problem—and that's soil erosion.

In Hickman County, we have 160,401 acres of land and 3,683 acres of water. Over 83,000 acres, or 52 percent of this land is cropland. Today, over 61,000 acres (74 percent) are eroding at rates over 5 tons per acre per year. That's a total soil loss of 1.8 million tons annually. All land uses contribute approximately 2 million tons of soil lost annually, four times the acceptable rate.

I'm often asked: Why do you farmers grow crops on land that washes away? I'll be the first to admit that we have thousands of acres in the Purchase area that should be in pasture and hay, with beef and dairy cattle and sheep. But you can't pay your debts with livestock and we certainly don't need anymore dairy products.

The demand has been for grain, and the farmers have met the demand. In the twelve year period, 1968–1980, cropland has increased in the eight county Purchase area from 366,000 acres to 880,000 acres. There's 60 percent of the total land in the Purchase area that's in cropland. Soil losses are approaching 13½ million tons per year.

I would like to relate a true story that happened to me while hunting this past winter. Now, I know your time is valuable, but I hope you agree that this experince is worth telling.

We have a large island in Hickman County. The water from the Mississippi River and from all the creeks in Western Kentucky sometimes get 20 feet over that island.

It's over it now, which isn't unusual, but it was over it in December, and that is unusual. When the water went down, I went over squirrel hunting. Each step I attempted to make, the soil built up on my shoes making it difficult to walk. I placed the rifle against a tree and with my knife, I cut a square of soil down to the leaves that had fallen in November. At least an inch of soil had been deposited by the receding water of that one overflow. Now, I've read that R.C.A. book of 163 pages and it's good. I've studied facts and figures of the Soil Conservation and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Services, but there's nothing that can make such an impression, or show the need as being on your knees on a seven thousand acre island seeing the best soil of Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Kentucky deposited among the cottonwood and the willows where it will do no one any good. It hurts to see the black soil from the North, but it hurt even more to see the brown clay loam of Westen Kentucky mixed with it.

Gentlemen, there is a need. The figures I have quoted were prior and up to 1980. With the additional funds targeted for the Western Kentucky area, a lot has been accomplished. Long range five year programs have been planned. Current projections indicate that 8 to 10 more years will be needed to cure 75 percent of the critical erosion problems that we face. Terraces, diversion, waterways, grade stabilization structures, strip cropping, contour farming, residue management, and I'm sure you know one of the greatest erosion control practices, no-till farming, originated in Western Kentucky.

We appreciate your help. We would also like to commend Mr. Phil Norman, Farm Editor of the Louisville Courier Journal and Times for his unbiased commentary on the problems faced by both the Jackson Purchase and the Nation on the serious problem of soil erosion, and support of the various programs that are being used to solve them. We ask for your continued support in our fight to keep our soil productive. I know it's difficut to convince others that there will ever be a shortage of food when it's wall to wall in every grocery store in the United States, but I know you can convince them that there is never going to be any more soil. The demands on the soils that we have grow greater each day. A little over 3 percent of the people in the country are producing food for less than 14 percent of the dollar. This is compared with 34 percent in Russia and 23 percent in Japan.

And here is something that really bothers me. Each year we pour more fertilizer to maintain our yields. Is our fertilizer supply endless? Without fertilizer we couldn't feed our own nation, certainly not the needs of others.

I appreciate your listening. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH E. PIGG, EXTENSION SOCIOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Good afternoon Senator Jepson and Senator Huddleston. It is a pleasure and an honor to be invited to testify before this subcommittee, and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity.

In general, I am impressed by the national plan for soil and water conservation. Being involved in a similar, though smaller in scope, effort to develop an educational plan for 208 nonpoint source pollution for Kentucky, I am aware of some of the difficulties faced by USDA in bringing this plan to its present form. Agency efforts to implement a meaningful public participation process are laudatory, and its success exemplary. In my opinion, the broad participation has provided a plan more comprehensive and more feasible than anything the agency might have developed on its own. Praiseworthy too is the agency-wide approach used which covers two administrations and perhaps more effort than was originally anticipated. Efforts such as this are rare in bureaucratic agencies, and while the successes and limitations of the process used have been noted,[1] USDA is still to be commended for having initiated a valuable and productive experience in its history. Americans can only hope this process will continue in order to fufill this present promise.

Several specific elements of the national plan are noteworthy. The prioritization of problems is important beginning. Not everyone will agree with the priorities established nor their relative importance, but the agency's commitment to specific activities is important to solving the problems of conserving natural resources and using scarce insitutional resources efficiently. Targeting agency resources on the most critical problems is another important beginning representing promising aspects of implementation not the least of which is the increased awareness to be provided some local areas where every encouragement is needed to solve physical problems of soil and water degradation. The emphasis on cost-sharing with states and conservation districts as well as providing matching funds will not only support the primary focus of implementation, but also promote increased accountability and support enforcement efforts. Conservation districts in Kentucky, for example, might be willing now to utilize their taxing powers to address local needs. The agency's commitment to a "system or practices" to be employed on the land to address soil erosion in the most effective manner is a welcome beginning, and with time, may approach the integration of conservation practices with other farm management system practices presently in use in agricultural enterprises. Still another important feature of the plan is its recognition of water quality needs, and the relationship between water quality and soil conservation which is likely to become a crucial feature (somewhat intentionally) of this plan with the demise of 208 program funding. Although the water quality/soil erosion relationship is not clearly discussed in the plan and the impact of the Rural Clean Water Program is ignored, laying suspect USDA commitment to water conservation for purposes other than flood control

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or future agricultural production, the fact that water quality is contained in this plan is important for future efforts even though USDA may eventually regret what may transpire in working out inter-agency efforts to preserve water quality. Finally, the promise to continue coordination of USDA programs to meet the requirements of this plan is critical to the credibility of the plan's objectives in the perspective of local people, and should promote vastly improved and necessary agency flexibility and consistency in program administration.

I would like to offer your subcommittee some thoughts on soil and water conservation as a social problem to consider in its deliberations on the plan. As a social problem, soil and water conservation has implications for societal, social collective, and individual levels of human endeavors. These three levels of activity experience necessary interaction just as they all interact with and relate to the physical environment. These interactions and inter-relationships are likely to be important in the implementation of the national plan for soil and water conservation.

At the societal level, soil and water conservation addresses important moral or ethical issues. In fact, good stewardship of the soil was a moral issue long before it was regarded as an economic, social or political problem. In the 19th century conservationists hailed "ecological balance" in their efforts to arouse public concern over exploitation of natural resources by human populations who held a belief that resources were essentially unlimited and created for human "consumption". This alternative ethic was further developed by people such as Aldo Leopold, Ian McHarg, Edward Hyams, and Wendell Berry in the secular context, and several writers in theological messages of both Protestant and Catholic perspectives. The Vice-President of the National Association of Conservation Districts, Neil Sampson was recently appealed to our moral conscience with his ten ethical prescriptions for using the land,[2] just as Hugh Bennett raised conservation problems to the level of moral issues in mobilizing public attitudes to support the efforts to implement soil conservation measures in the 1930's and 1940's. Notwithstanding the fact that some studies show that farmers generally believe in soil conservation and stewardship of the land,[3] research also indicates that farmers believe they don't need to do more to control soil erosion.[4]

Another issue to be dealt with is the conflict over individual and social rights, responsibilities, costs, and benefits. Farmers, of course, feel this conflict more emotionally and realistically than anyone else, and there lies much of the difficulty. Soil erosion may represent a minor cost to most individual farmers, while many soil conservation measures are very expensive investments for minimal returns. The public costs to "clean up" eroded soil in waterways, behind dams, or in drainage ditches is substantial, not counting the aggregated loss of productivity and food security over time. While this is an oversimplification, it is evident that soil erosion is primarily a public cost while conservation is a private cost borne by farmers, so it should not be surprising that farmers believe that the public should share the cost of investment in conservation measures.[5] This and other related viewpoints raise questions regarding individual property rights and the social function of private ownership which involve the balancing of privileges and obligations of property use in the social interest. As much as anyone else, farmers dislike restrictions being placed on use of their land, and to many, using conservation measures is such a restriction, one initiated by government agencies.

The societal concern over the externalities of soil erosion and conservation and the related public costs is closely related. Air pollution, water quality degradation, sedimentation, along with dissolved nutrients, minerals, and pesticides are among the "off-site damages" about which the general public is becoming more concerned, and for which enterprises which distrub the soil are blamed.[6]

All these points illustrate the fact that conservation is important, not because economics or natural science demonstrates that it is, but because people say it is; this importance is a socio-political reality more than an economic or physical reality. As one observer has noted "the most progress can be made if we reinforce the ethical call to conservation with policies that are sensitive to the distribution of costs."[7]

Soil and water conservation is a social problem because it involves individual human aspects. After all it is individuals who disturb the soil and create the conditions which permit or encourage soil erosion and water quality degradation. It is at this level that, sooner or later, the national plan must have an impact on practices. Framers, timber harvesters, rangeland users etc., use practices which conserve as well as waste soil, prevent as well as encourage erosion, damage as well as preserve water quality. The task at hand is to support the use of natural resource conservation practices and discourage those which are detrimental. Considerable research has gone into explaining why certain practices are used and others are not, and one analysis concludes that several conditions must be met before conservation-oriented practices will be used. These include: (a) a perception that a need exists for corrective action (usually related to physical conditions); (b) a psychosocial inclination to be positive toward environmental maintenance; (c) a positive attitude toward soil erosion abatement efforts (i.e., that such efforts will not damage short term profitability); (d) a base of information on which to act; and (e) a means of implementing soil erosion control practices.[8]

Secondly, individual actions are conditioned by the degree of control over the land. Considerable concern exists today that a large proportion of soil erosion occurs on land rented for agricultural uses, and there is limited evidence that the use of conservation practices varies by whether or not the land is owned or rented.[9] Landlord-tenant relationships are now becoming the focus of activities designed to encourage written contracts containing best management practices as part of the conditions. The social aspects of this issue are made more difficult with the recognition that "tax-loss farming" promotes absentee ownership further complicating landlord-tenant relationships as well as making long-term oversight of land conditions more difficult for owners.

While I mentioned social-psychological factors associated with conservation practice use above, there is evidence that structural features of American agriculture also play a role in use of such practices. Limited research has shown that larger-scale farm enterprises are more likely to use conservation practices than smaller-scale enterprises.[10] If true, several implications follow this relationship. In many cases, it is these larger farmers that have the best land—flattest, most fertile, etc.—to start with, and have less need to use conservation practices. Larger enterprises also have the most capital to use as a resource for supporting investments in soil-conserving practices whether it is a structural practice or a new piece of equipment for using conservation tillage. Larger farms also have greater access to agency programs such as those of SCS, ASCS, Extension, and the District Conservationist which further support the use of conservation practices through education, technical assistance, and cost-sharing programs.

Such factors must be accommodated in the development of plans for implementing the national soil and water conservation plan. These social factors are inter-related, affecting each other in ways that are not yet well understood and not readily amenable to manipulation or control.

Third, soil and water conservation is a social problem because it involves collective action at several levels to adequately address solutions to physical and social problems. The plan's emphasis on targeting is a good example to begin with, because it anticipates that identification of physical problems will guide the allocation of agency (i.e., USDA) resources. However, soil and water conservation problems are human, social problems, and targeting cannot overlook the populations affecting and effected by these problems. Guidelines for selecting target areas should therefore include physical and social guidelines, yet none are included in the plan. While implying that a standard for allowable erosion exists in the statistics presented, the plan offers no guideline for targeting, and local action groups responsible for implementation will wonder aloud "where's 'T'?" Further, as proposed, targeting involves group action at the state and local levels particularly, a social problem for which an organization exists, but which is without precedent in organizational experience. This lack of experience promises trouble for local leadership in decisionmaking to determine problem areas, individuals, relative severity and eligibility for support. Finally, just as the public was broadly involved in development of the national plan, they should be, and will be expecting to have some involvement in the development of local action plans especially with regard to targeting decisions. This represents yet another difficult challenge for local leadership.

If local implementation is one of the strengths of the national plan, it is also a feature which promises tremendous difficulties in effective implementation. Plan components which encourage this collective support may be as important as those which are designed to encourage farmer support. On the one hand there exists the traditional conservatism of local groups in rural areas. This well-known tendency promises to make problem identification difficult and conflict resolution skills mandatory for local leaders particularly as they struggle with a strategy that involves, potentially, unequal treatment of local residents who have become accustomed to certain equities in program resource access. Local leaders must therefore become skilled in public opinion leadership and collective action techniques which very few now possess. On the other hand, the plans for matching funds may offer a significant "carrot" which will encourage local action in support of the national plan, although I doubt it will be sufficient alone. Cross-compliance would be another signifi-

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cant, though "sticky," enticement to local participation, although enforcement would be difficult to implement. While most conservationists will likely support the use of "conservation systems" or sets of practices over single practices on the farm because they will more effectively deal with location specific problems, determination of individual components which will be included in the system also requires new patterns of decisionmaking for which local leaders are unprepared. Since there is likely to be disagreement over the appropriate means with state and federal officials as well as local individuals and groups, this may be an extremely difficult hurdle for local action agencies to overcome.

Obviously, this local implementation focus will require considerable participation of other agencies, at all levels of institutional involvement. The promise of improved USDA coordination of programs must be met in order to support local action effectively. This will require agreement on objectives and the means to achieve them which are now missing. It also requires coordinated funding requests. For example, the budget estimates provided in the plan make no reference to budgets for other USDA agencies such as ASCS, Extension or Forest Services, which are anticipated to be actively involved and supporting the implementation of the plan. At this level also, collective action skills will be required which many technical personnel in the agencies have only begun to acquire as a result of their participation in the RCA process.

All of these considerations are related to the plan as written or to the implementation plan to be developed in which I have assumed this subcommittee will have some role. No doubt officials in USDA have already struggled with some of these factors in preparation of implementation plans. Nevertheless, it would seem advisable to have some general guidelines included in the plan, along with more specific acknowledgement of the social nature of the soil and water conservation problem reflected in the social and institutional arrangements to be made in support of the plan's objectives and priorities.

Perhaps the greatest oversight of the planning document, however, is the lack of agreement apparent regarding the definition of the "problem." Obviously, this is an essential first step in solving soil and water conservation problems. The plan implies that, with the maintenance of a rather large "base program" that the "problem" is the lack of coverage of all the private and public lands with conservation practices. This definition fits the program historically, and conforms to the practices of agencies such as ASCS. What of the externalities and "off-site damage" aspects of conservation? What effect does the calculation of public and private costs have on the definition? Is "on-site" erosion considered as great a problem as the "off-site?" Will "cheap food" continue to mean to farmers "cheap soil?" What of water quality and efforts already expended to insure the reduction of non-point source pollution from agriculture and silviculture use? It is apparent in my experience that no agreement exists at the federal level on the nature of the "problem" between such agencies as USDA and EPA, much less within an individual agency. How do we expect agreement from the many local conservation agencies expected to implement the plan in such a situation? What will be the future of cross compliance when evidence suggests a majority of farmers support it while ASCS officials and committee oppose it? As it stands, the plan will acknowledge a multiplicity of definitions reflecting the multiplicity of local interests. Finally, to what degree is the "problem" technical or physical, and to what degree social, economic, political, and moral? How do we intend to resolve these differences? In my opinion, the resolution must involve a combination of national leadership promised in the national plan for soil and water conservation, and local judgment and energy.

Thank you again for the invitation to submit these comments for this subcommittee's consideration.

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STATEMENT OF SAM McELROY, MEMBER, KENTUCKY LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

Thanks for the opportunity to appear before this committee to speak in behalf of soil and water conservation. I especially want to thank Senator Huddleston for his work with soil conservation and farmers. The need for conservation in western Kentucky is great, as erosion is more severe now than in the dust bowl days.

Examples: Union County has 125,000 acres of cropland. 105,000 acres are sloping fields. 98,000 acres are exceeding allowable soil loss to maintain sustained productivity. Average soil loss in Union County is 16.5 tons per acre for cropland. Henderson County has 107,000 acres of sloping cropland with soil loss of 1,097,178 tons, averaging 10.2 tons per acre each year. Daviess County has 123,000 acres of sloping cropland with soil loss of 1,693,995 tons annually. Average soil loss of 12.5 tons per acre each year.

No-till has been advocated as a cure-all conservation treatment; however, I submit that no-till will not solve all soil erosion. There is a great need for terraces, grass waterways, diversion ditches, land drainage and water management systems.

The western coal field has 120,000 acres of abandoned mine land that needs to be treated. Reclaiming this land will not return an economic benefit for many years.

I would like to submit to this committee that farmers in the area I farm are experiencing difficult economic times due to low prices and increased cost of equipment, fuel, chemicals, seed and fertilizer.

Soil conservation practices require time and money that western Kentucky farmers do not have.

Conservation treatments of our land will sustain productivity for future gernerations and possibly help with the current unemployment situation.

STATEMENT OF HANK GRADDY, CHAIRMAN, CUMBERLAND CHAPTER, SIERRA CLUB

Senator Roger Jepsen, Senator Walter D. Huddleston, and other members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry and Environment, it is a pleasure for me to be here on behalf of the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club. My mane is Hank Graddy. I am State Chairman of the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club and I am an attorney from Versailles, Kentucky. My family has farmed in Woodford County, Kentucky for six generations. My brother and my father are currently farming the family farm. My commitment to protection of farmland is basic to my environmental activities. I am currently serving as Chairman of the Sierra Club Midwest Region Agricultural Lands Task Force. In addition, my practice as an attorney has regularly involved efforts to protect farmland from competing land uses.

Historically, the Sierra Club has not been actively involved with farmland issues. This organization has traditionally been involved with preservation of wilderness and parks and other public lands issues. Recently however, protection of farmland has become a Sierra Club priority, not only within the Midwest and the Northern Plains regions of the Club but nationally. In January of this year the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club identified preservation of farmland as a priority conservation effort for the next two years. For that reason I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this mornings discussion.

As a member of the Sierra Club I submitted extensive comments to the United States Department of Agriculture as part of the Soil and Water Resource Conservation Act public participation programs in 1979 and 1980. I have reviewed the March 12, 1982, report of the public comments on the revised draft RCA program report. I have reviewed the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation, 1982 Final

Program Report and Environmental Impact Statement. I commend the program for committing to target critical areas of erosion problem. Soil conservation is now too critical to depend on the "first come first served" approach.

I would like to sumarize my criticism of the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation as follows:

1. *Need more funding.*—The first and most significant criticism of the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation is a matter that is not prominently addressed in the 1982 Final Program Report. Specifically, this administration has simply not allocated enough resources to the program to make it effective. The Final Program report notes in a number of places that soil and water conservation efforts in this country have been in place for over 50 years and notes the mixed or limited success of the soil and water conservation efforts to date. The report discusses two levels of funding: low bound funding at a level of $735 million for 1983 through 1987 and high bound funding which proposes to fund in 1983 at the 1982 level of $1,005 million with a five percent annual increase. But this administration has propcsed less funding than the low bound. This administration proposes to cut cost-sharing from $200 million to $56 million. This level of funding limits the ability of the Soil Conservation Service to have a meaningful impact on the problem of soil and water conservation. It signals to the Department of Agriculture and to the public at large this administration's lack of real commitment to solve these critical problems.

2. *Need for mandatory controls.*—My second criticism of the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation is that it fails to address the need for mandatory standards for soil erosion and the impact of soil erosion on water quality. Historically, the federal efforts to control erosion have been voluntary. Money was made available to those farmers and operators who sought to use that money pretty much on a "first come-first serve" basis. The national program attempts to get away from the "first come-first serve" basis to its credit and it attempts to target assistance to those areas that are identified as critical problems.

In addition, the program proposes to change certain eligibility requirements for Farmers Home Administration loans to incorporate a commitment to correct serious erosion problem. These are important positive features of the program. However, in considering the preferred program and the two primary alternative programs in Chapter 4 this report gives fairly short shrift to federal initiatives that would require compliance with erosion standards. The Department did not consider a Conservation Practices Act and did not consider cross compliance (requirement that a farmer meet certain erosion control standards in order to continue to receive federal subsidies or benefits of agricultural programs). It is essential that the efforts to protect our soil and water incorporate mandated compliance. We can no longer afford the luxury of voluntary compliance by those few farmers who recognize their obligation of good stewardship. It is essential that a federal program be effective enough to reach those irresponsible operations that are contributing dramatically to the problem of loss of soil quality and water quality.

3. *Do not need more reorganization.*—My third criticism is that the preferred program appears to me to be one more effort to reorganize the approach to soil and water conservation. As far as I am concerned the proposed reorganization to try to shift the initiative to the local and state agencies is more paper shuffling and less action. There have been sufficient legislative initiatives and directives, sufficient studies and sufficient demonstration of the need to act. It is incumbent upon the USDA to move forward effectively and to take the lead. Kentucky has its Soil and Water Conservation Commission and they have published a very handsome program based on the results of the soil and Water Resources Conservation Act analysis but the lead must come from Washington. The preferred alternative proposes to redirect the USDA effort and transfer the initiative to the state and local agencies. Many of these agencies do not exist or if they exist at all are not sufficiently funded to pick up this initiative. In effect, the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation seeks to remake the wheel.

I will discuss briefly the problem in Kentucky. Kentucky has an estimated 4 million acres of cultivated land. Of that acreage 2,274,000 acres have an average annual soil loss of less than five tons per acre. The balance, 1.8 million acres, has an average soil loss in excess of five tons per acre which exceeds generally recognized standards for maintaining soil quantity and quality. 405,000 acres have an average soil loss exceeding 25 tons per year. Another way of stating the problem in Kentucky is as follows: in 1977 cropland in Kentucky averaged 9.4 tons per acre of soil erosion for total of 51 million tons. Pasture land averaged 6.4 acres of soil erosion for a total of 36 million tons. It is estimated that 55 percent of Kentucky's cropland acreage needs erosion control practices.

There are other critical problems in Kentucky. The rural areas surrounding Lexington, Louisville, Northern Kentucky, Henderson and Owensboro are under pressure to convert prime farmland, that is the farmland that is most productive, to other non-agricultural uses. To date, approximately 250,000 acres of prime farmland in Kentucky are now irreversibly committed to non-agricultural use. The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet "Report to Congress on Water Quality" for years 1980 and 1981 identifies erosion from farmland as a major cause of water pollution within the Commonwealth. This pollution problem includes deposit of solids in the water as well as the runoff of toxic chemicals used for pest control, weed control and used for such practices as no-till cultivation.

Kentucky has not ignored this problem. I have already made reference to the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission and this excellent publication that states the problem in clear and easily understood terms. Likewise, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet Division of Water has recognized the need to improve farm practices as a part of the solution to the water quality problem. In 1982 the Kentucky General Assembly passed an Agricultural District Bill that was designed to help protect farmers from competing land uses. This legislation came in response to the Executive Order by Governor John Y. Brown creating the Agricultural Land Study and Policy Committee. In addition, those representatives of the federal effort including the extension service, the ASCS offices, the SCS offices have served their local communities well within their limits during the years. Kentucky's farm economy has not been as hard hit as the farm economy in the Midwest. Tobacco has provided some relief to the farmers in Central Kentucky and other parts of the state. There is growing public concern about the problem. Active organizations in addition to the traditional farm organizations such as the Farm Bureau and the National Farmers Organization include the New Farm coalition, the Kentucky Farmlands Committee, the Kentucky Conservation Committee and the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club.

I have cataloged these local resources because the national program for soil and water conservation has adopted as the preferred alternative increased reliance upon the state and local efforts. I want to report that in my opinion there are people at the state and local levels who would like to help solve the problem and will work with the USDA to try to implement an effective program but I stand by my criticism of the program now before you that it is (1) underfunded (2) avoids using the tools that are essential to make real progress, that is, mandatory standards, cross compliance, Conservation Practices Act and (3) this program seems to abdicate, to some extent, responsibility at the federal level and puts it on the shoulders of entities that are not yet strong enough or effective enough to carry it. My criticism should be balanced with my strong support for the concept of targeting critical areas and incorporating conservation practices into federal loans.

Why does the Sierra Club care? As I stated earlier the Sierra Club has been an organization that emphasized issues such as wilderness protection, park land protection, proper use of public lands. Sierra Club cares about preservation of farmland for a very obvious reason: everything is connected. As inner cities decay and suburbs spread out across the adjoining prime farmland, farmers are required to move from level and gently rolling lands to lands less suitable for cultivation thereby increasing the risk of erosion and hastening the time when they will be required to go even further and try to convert forest land and wilderness land to cropland. The Sierra Club seeks to help redirect this decay to restore the urban areas in order that they may contain their populations; to protect good farmland so that it may provide sustainable yield, now and in the future; and to set aside those special, fragile, unique areas that deserve to be in forest or wilderness or parkland designation. The matter of preserving farmland is no longer the province of the agricultural sector alone. It is a problem that effects us all. The Sierra Club looks forward to working with the agricultural community and Congress toward a solution. Again, I thank you for the opportunity to participate.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM H. ZIMMERMAN, PRESIDENT, BLUEGRASS CHAPTER, SOIL CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

I represent the Bluegrass Chapter, Soil Conservation Society of America. We have 120 professional members in the eastern half of Kentucky. Our national motto is "to advance the art and science of good land use." I am the current president of the Bluegrass chapter, and have been an active member of the Soil Conservation Society for over 30 years with career experience as a soil scientist, agriculture economist, agronomist, and resource planner.

In this statement, I would like to emphasize two extremely important facts concerning the national soil and water conservation program as it is related to Kentucky.

The first is the scope of the problem as documented in the Kentucky Soil and Water Program which was prepared by the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission in 1982 through a USDA-SCS-RCA grant.

The second is the increased need of federal financial and technical assistance to landowners and citizens who are having difficulties in controlling increased soil erosion, reduced water quality and water supply, increased flooding, and related natural resource degradation. Last year the total estimated soil erosion from all sources in Kentucky was 141,000,000 tons. Over one-third of this erosion was from cultivated cropland—405,000 acres had a soil loss of over 25 tons per acre; this is over five times the acceptable rate.

This excessive amount of soil erosion was mainly due to the doubling of soybeans and corn acreage in the past 10 years—up to 3.3 million acres. Due to the high cost of crop production and low returns, farmers need more financial and technical assistance in order to install adequate conservation cropping systems to control erosion.

We support the concept of identifying priority conservation problems in specific geographical areas—such as cropland erosion in the western third of Kentucky. However, this needs to be new or additional appropriations and not taken from successful and needed conservation activities and programs in the non-targeted areas.

We believe there should be more involvement by local conservation districts and state resource agencies, thus forming a stronger federal-state-local partnership. This would require new money for grants to states and districts, and should in no way reduce the current federal on-going conservation appropriations.

We feel that current, documented state soil and water programs, together with conservation district long range plans, should be the dominant basis for setting soil and water conservation priorities and establishing local conservation needs as well as determining technical and financial help.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this statement.

[The following letter was submitted by Gayle Lawson, Harlan County Rural Development Committee:]

HARLAN, KY., *January 12, 1982.*

Hon. JOHN R. BLOCK,
Secretary of Agriculture,
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY: The purpose of this letter is to record my comments and suggestions regarding the Revised Draft RCA Program Report and Environmental Impact Statement and the response form provided by the Department.

The remarks which follow are made after much time was spent in study of the complete Revised Draft RCA Program Report and the response form and after attending two local public presentations by a representative of the Soil Conservation Service on the Preferred Program.

For the last three years I have attended all of the regular meetings of the Ohio River Basin Commission as a member of the Citizens' Advisory Council. For the past two years I have served as Chairman of the Harlan County Rural Development Committee. I sit on the Cumberland Valley Area Development District Board as an alternate for our State Representative of the 88th District, Roger Noe, and I serve as an associate member of the Cumberland Valley RC&D Council. Therefore, I am not a total stranger to the conservation issues and concerns of both this Appalachian Mountain region but also those throughout the Cumberland and Ohio River basins. Furthermore, I have participated in public input meetings in two previous years concerning the RCA program.

Through my previous involvement with ASCS, SCS, RC&D, and Extension Service personnel I have gained a tremendous respect for these people and place high value on the services they provide.

The first criticism I have of the Preferred Program is that we in Harlan County stand to lose their services because, according to the Preferred Program we do not have the number one priority problem, soil erosion on croplands, defined in this program. We are not even near a target area as shown on the Preferred Program target area map. One would think that we would be included as a target area because of the next highest priority, flood damages in upstream areas, but not so. Although Harlan County is subject to repeated devastating floods, we are not shown on any map as a target area. I interpret this to mean that funds and personnel will be placed, as is stated on the response form, where the most serious erosion and related problems impair the nation's agricultural productivity. I would like to know, what is included in agricultural productivity? According to the "Cumberland River Basin Regional Water and Land Resources Plan," June 1981, Ohio River Basin Commission (page III-90) in the Upper Cumberland Basin, only 6.3 percent of the land area is used for crops; 19.6 precent for pasture; and 53.5 percent is forest. Are not forests and pasture lands agricultural? Are they not also in great need of technical and financial assistance to increase their productivity?

According to the "Cumberland River Basin Regional Water and Land Resources Plan,"cited previously forestry production needs are discussed on page III-102.

"Efforts have been made to assess the ability of the local forest resources to meet future demands for wood products. According to the best estimates, the study area (the Cumberland River Basin) will need to produce 238 million cubic feet of forest products in the year 2020, compared to the 1977 production of 82.33 million cubic feet."

With the demand expected to be approximately three times present production by the year 2020 isn't it logical to expect that the Secretary of Agriculture would give serious consideration to the ORBC recommendation on page III-109 which include the following:

"Basic forestland problems would receive specific efforts by federal and state agencies in cooperation with private sources to stimulate the forest industry * * *

"* * * More land will have to come under good forest management practices. Again, this begins with a strong information/education program supported by state foresters and the forest industry. Utilization experts will also be required. More forest industry is also necessary to fully utilize the materials harvested."

In view of present trends in state government the possibility of more funds and technical assistance from state government for enhancement of forest production is practically non-existent.

The need for an intensified watershed management program for all reaches of the Cumberland River above Cumberland Falls is paramount to the future of this nation. This whole area, and particularly my home county of Harlan, contains one of the world's largest reserves of high Btu, low sulphur coal. In order to mine this coal, workers must live within reasonable driving distance of their work sites. Presently this is impossible for many workers due to lack of housing. With an intensified watershed management program, flooding problems could be reduced, reclamation of orphan spoil lands intensified, surface water run-off slowed down, ground water supplies re-charged and the development of safe, sanitary, suitable housing would be accelerated.

More funds and technical assistance directed into timberstand and woodlot improvement programs such as the one presently underway in Rockcastle County, Kentucky under the RC&D Forestry Committee could help develop an alternate industry to coal mining while increasing forestry production to meet the future needs of this nation.

Waste wood from the culling of existing timberstands could result in bio mass production of gasohol and other energy products as well as providing pulp wood, fire wood, wood chips, charcoal, pine posts, and railroad ties.

We have one member of our Rural Development Committee who is so involved in forestry production that he gave up the practice of dentistry to become a tree farmer. He could not have achieved this without the technical assistance provided through USDA people.

Tree farming of Christmas trees could become a profitable small business enterprise in this area with additional technical assistance.

I have some serious problems with other aspects of the Preferred Program. Why target most of the conservation effort into areas with the most problems and thereby give preferrential treatment to the worst offenders? According to the Revised Draft RCA Program page 3-5, the following statements are made:

It is on "10 percent of cropland that most cropland erosion occurs; some at the rate of 100 tons per acre or more annually." . . . "Controlling the erosion on the most severely eroding 10 percent of the cropland would reduce the total cropland erosion by 54 percent and excessive erosion on cropland by 89 percent."

Isn't it reasonable to assume that, after these many years of free technical assistance offered to these land owner/users and the generous cost sharing plans made available to them, voluntary compliance is not getting the job done with this small percentage (10 percent) who are causing most of the problem? If reduction of soil erosion to tolerable limits so that soil productive capacity can be preserved and food and fiber costs contained are the goals of conservation programs then we must look to other means of achieving these goals.

Isn't there ample evidence from the persistence of the problem that land owners/users do not intend to employ the best management practices on a voluntary basis?

With the following figures on sources of the nation's total water erosion it seems crystal clear to me that the only reasonable course of action is to place mandatory controls on the farming industry.

Page 3-5 of Draft RCA Program: 11 percent stream banks; 6 percent gullies; 3 percent roads and roadsides; 2 percent construction sites; and 78 percent sheet and rill erosion.

I strongly disagreee with the first statement below from the Draft RCA Program page 6-43 concerning cross compliance.

"A requirement for conformance with acceptable management systems as a requirement for participation in other USDA program would be more acceptable under the bonus approach than under the mandatory approach."

My comments on the following quote from the source above (page 6-44) are given after the quote.

"Participation in these programs has been voluntary, relying on commitment to a conservation ethic and incentives. It has resulted in major achievements in protecting the resource base. However, traditional program and approaches appear to be reaching the limits of their effectiveness in bringing about full achievement of soil and water conservation objectives."

Isn't the above statement indicative of the fact that there are those who are not committed to the conservation ethic and will not voluntarily further the achievement of soil and water conservation objectives?

Could it be that one of the reasons for the USDA seeking more state involvement is so that the unpleasant task of dealing with land owner/users who do not voluntarily comply with the best management practices can be shifted to the states?

If this problem is nation wide, as the report seems to indicate, then it appears that federal legislation requiring compliance is in order, with state primacy for development of appropriate regulations to meet regional needs.

This matter of voluntary compliance for agriculture "sticks in my craw". The federal government has thrown the book at the coal mining industry with mandatory controls on any and all surface distrubances. Yet, in the coal industry as in agriculture it is only the relatively few in number who operate with no regard for the rights of others and are the major cause of the problem. As previously mentioned it is on "10 percent of the cropland that most cropland erosion occurs at the rate of 100 tons per acre, or more, annually".

In this connection, the following quotes from the "Kentucky 208 Water Quality Management Summary: Kentucky: The Use of Our Land and The Quality of Our Water-Summary for The Prevention and Control of Non-Point Sources of Water Pollution" published June 1979, by the Department for Natural Resources, quote from page 37: "Data from that assessment (field assessment by Soil Conservation Service) indicate soil erosion exceeds tolerable limits on almost one out of every two acres of Kentucky cropland."

Quote from same source, page 41: "The major sources of soil erosion in Kentucky agriculture are from lands where farmers are cropping Class II and Class III soils as if they were Class I soils, and Class IV and Class VI soils as if they were Class III. This situation is most severe where previously established terraces, contours, and waterways have been destroyed and put to crops.

What is to be gained by a voluntary program which places no constraints or penalties on the land owner/user who has, by choice, destroyed the soil erosion control measures which taxpayers and purchasers of agricultural products have helped pay for so that long-term productivity of agricultural land can be preserved?

In my opinion, the continuation of soil erosion control programs under voluntary participation is an exercise in futility. As soon as the economy makes it profitable for the land owner/user to put into intensive production lands which are unsuitable (as sited in the quote above) then the major portion of the croplands erosion program is gone with the water and the sediment.

We in Appalachia feel cheated because the Secretary's Preferred Program will target, apparently, all personnel and funds into critical croplands soil erosion areas.

Some of the questions for which we respectfully request answers are as follows:

1. What will happen to the technical and financial assistance for owners of forest lands?

2. Who will help owners develop forest management and marketing plans?

3. Who will provide the information/education programs which will impress upon our children and young adults the importance of returning more land to trees and protecting the existing timber stands?

4. Who will provide the education/information programs for our children, adults, and especially our elected officials on land use planning?

5. Very, very urgent! Who will complete the soil surveys in the Appalachian region?

6. Who will help to provide forest fire protection to forest land owners?

Of the 13 conservation concerns (see page 5-10 report) listed below which ones will we have technical and/or financial assistance on?

1. Watershed protection.
2. Water supply.
3. Cropland productivity.
4. Pasture/Range productivity.
5. Flood control—Urgently needed.
6. Drainage.
7. Irrigation water management.
8. Waste Management—Help urgently needed.
9. Timber Productivity—Help urgently needed.
10. Outdoor Recreation—Technical assistance needed on re-developing Cranks Creek Lake.
11. Land Reclamation—Help urgently needed for abandoned mine spoil banks.
12. Wind Erosion.
13. Habitat development—Technical assistance urgently needed by coal mining companies. Hunting for a Fee could become a big business in Harlan County if wildlife habitat were improved drastically.

I find difficulty in accepting the composite finding of the 1977 GAO Study as justification for the selection of the Secretary's Preferred Program. (see pages 5-11, 12).

The two major problems according to this study were (1) Lack of attention to erosion control and (2) little priority setting. With regard to problem one the following quote needs to be analyzed carefully: "Program personnel and financial resources were directed toward such objectives as water management and production enhancement even though serious erosion problems were present in the areas studied".

My analysis is that the Soil Conservation personnel are being blamed for a problem over which they had no control. Under the present voluntary set up, land owners were the ones who chose water management and production enhancement over soil erosion control. The reason being that their objectives were based upon pocketbook enhancement instead of soil protection. The same philosophy applies to the setting of priorities under a voluntary program. The landowner calls the shots and the USDA technical personnel do the best they can with the people they have to work with. The USDA employee cannot force a landowner to accept or comply with even the most exemplary plans, with no federal guidelines or penalties for non compliance.

I find even more difficulty accepting the following quote from the GAO Study, page 5-12: "none of the three programs was concentrating scarce resources on the most effective erosion control measures, nor were they working with the people who most needed help in reducing erosion."

My question is: What consideration was given to the fact that often those who need help most do not seek or want help, but prefer to do their own thing their own way? I know from my own experience as a public school teacher that the teacher who is most in need of the help of the supervsior is usually the last one to seek that help.

Furthermore, the Technician has only so much time to give to his potential participants. If he determines that a particular situation needs attention and he offers to provide this assistance he can only participate with the owner when he is requested to do so.

With regard to the Preferred Program and the matter of better coordination among USDA agencies, the state, and local people there seems to be a great information void among the people in the USDA who developed the strategies for achieving this coordination. If these program writers will refer to the following documents I believe they will find that their proposed plan for new boards and coordination strategies is really the re-invention of the wheel.

1. USDA Secretary's Memorandum No. 1979, dated March 21, 1979—Statement on Rural Development.

This is an executive mandate from the Secretary of Agriculture to all USDA agencies to coordinate their programs with the rural development programs of state and local governments. It is a mandate to create and implement a process for involving the private sector along with local, state and federal agencies in establishing policies and programs that affect rural areas.

It mandates all USDA agencies to provide aggressive leadership and assistance and be more responsive to the needs and desires of rural people.

2. In short, this memorandum along with the Rural Development policy act of 1980. Public Law 96-355 Sept. 24, 1980 provides the kind of structure under which all USDA agencies can coordinate their services to the maximum benefit of local people.

The memo provides for an Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee at the federal level head by the assistant secretary for Rural Development.

Since Soil Conservation is only one of the many agencies listed it seems to me that this broad based national committee, already in place, is the appropriate national coordinating committee or board.

Furthermore, there is, in Kentucky, a state-wide Rural Development Committee composed of the heads of federal and state agriculture related programs along with citizen representatives. In addition, there is a regional committee, and a local committee of citizens, agency people, and elected officials in each of the 120 counties.

My question is, with regards to all the plans to establish new boards, why reinvent the wheel? We already have functioning bodies. Why not set as a goal the improvement of their performance?

In conclusion, I would like to express my dissatisfaction with the fact that the Preferred Program was presented to Congress before the comment period was closed.

Has all of the time and effort I have put into the preparation of these comments been just another means for the USDA to say that the letter of the law has been complied with?

Respectfully submitted,

GAYLE F. LAWSON, *Vice Chairman,*
Harlan County Rural Development Committee.

STATEMENT OF JIM SHAW, REPRESENTING THE KENTUCKY YOUNG FARMER ASSOCIATION

The Kentucky Young Farmer program is a vital part of the total program of Vocational Education in Agriculture. It is recognized that courses for secondary or high school students alone are not adequate to meet the needs of all persons who are preparing for or who have become engaged in the work of the farm or farm related occupations. Therefore it is necessary that special classes should be provided for out-of-school young farmers. The complexities of modern agriculture and its importance to the economy of the nation require that more time be given to out-of-school groups.

Young farmers are those individuals who are out of high school who have or want to become successfully established in farming or employed in an agricultural occupation. They may be single or married. Some live with their parents, others have their own homes. Their status in farming vary widely. They may be employees, renters, partners, managers, or they may have a family and are involved in farming or becoming established in an agricultural occupation.

Well informed, efficient and progressive young farmers are extremely important to the nation's welfare. Many are needed each year to replace farmers who retire or die. All young farmers should have access to agricultural instruction for continuous updating and to keep abreast with changing technology, marketing and management practices.

Programs of Agricultural Education for young farmers should be a part of the total school program. Providing young farmer instruction is an opportunity for the school to extend its service in the community. Local teachers of agriculture should provide systematic group instruction and on site individual instruction.

Instructional programs in vocational agriculture for young farmers should be initiated when the teachers and school administrators recognize the need, the opportunity for education service and the process of developing them. Many departments of Vocational Agriculture should provide Young Farmer programs.

The Young Farmer Association (YFA) is a leadership development organization of those students enrolled in young farmer classes. YFA offers opportunity for social activities that involves wives of YFA members, competitive activities, recreational activities and leadership development; 23 States representing 28,000 young farm families.

KENTUCKY YOUNG FARMER ASSOCIATION HISTORY

The Kentucky Young Farmer Association was organized in August, 1958, at the Fourth Annual Kentucky Young Farmer Conference. Before this date, young farmer conferences were held in 1955, 1956, and 1957.

The conference programs were planned and conducted by vocational agriculture teachers, young farmers, teacher trainers, and supervisors, in agricultural education. The conference programs stressed improving instruction for young farmers. Following the second conference, it was learned that young farmers were giving sincere consideration to a state organization for young farmers. This interest developed from small groups of young farmers discussing their needs between the sessions of the conferences. The young farmers requested time during the closing sessions of the third conference to discuss these needs. The minutes of this meeting reveal that a committee of young farmers was appointed to develop the framework for a state young farmer association. The committee was instructed to present its proposals at a called meeting of delegates from young farmer classes.

In February, 1958, a meeting of delegates from young farmer classes was called to give consideration to proposals on a state constitution and bylaws, a program of activities, local chapter suggestions for affiliating with the State Association, and details of presenting the decisions at the 1958 young farmer conference.

The young farmers in session at the conference in August revised the proposals and adopted the final draft of the Constitution and Bylaws. After adopting the decisions made, officers and committees were elected for the following year—1959-60.

The first young farmer convention was held in July of 1959 at Mammoth Cave National Park.

Kentucky young farmer delegate assemblies were held in 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, and 1964 with representatives from the affiliated chapters and young farmers classes. The primary purposes of the delegate assembly was to give detailed consideration to the program of activities and business of the Kentucky Young Farmer Association.

During the 1964 convention, it was decided to combine the convention and the delegate assembly.

In July, 1976, the first YFA Summer Tour was held in Christian County, sponsored by the Christian County YFA.

ANDERSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
Lawrenceburg, Ky., June 2, 1983.

Senator ROGER JEPSEN,
Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry, and Environment, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Washington, D.C.

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The Supervisors of the Anderson Conservation District welcome the opportunity to address the concerns of our district to the members of Congress who can help us to effect solutions.

Anderson County, located 50 miles east of Louisville is like many counties in Kentucky—small family farms, many of them with a tobacco base. Major agricultural enterprises are dairy and beef cattle so the development and maintenance of good pastures on hilly, rocky ground with thin soil are the number one priority.

Of the money allocated for spring seedings in 1983, 11 of the 12 have been completed under the Agriculture Conservation Program (ACP) with a twelfth completing the seeding on his own. Other seeding requests from farmers were discouraged due to the lack of funding and the cost and effort of obtaining a soil test prior to application. However, the county executive director indicates there are many inquiries about the program. With the maintenance of good cover a prime concern, the need for additional funds to more adequately fund this program is an ongoing problem.

Also, the referrals to the Soil Conservation Service for technical assistance on ponds, sod waterways, springs, and diversions have continued to grow. We have 10 referrals to the SCS so far in 1983, but the county executive director indicates there are double the number of requests for funding, and the year is only half finished.

To further elaborate on the funding of the ACP program, in 1979 Anderson County received $14,709, in 1980 we received $14,573, in 1981 we received $14,230, in 1982, we received $14,337, and so far in 1983 we have received $12,819. The funds have remained relatively constant since 1979 at around $14,000 (with the exception of 1983 which has yet to be completed), while the needs have continued to grow and costs of hiring bulldozers, backhoes, purchasing supplies have continued to climb.

One technical problem the Agricultural Conservation Program has is that in recent years one never knows when the funding will arrive and for how much. For 1981 we received funds on 3 separate occasions, for 1982, we received funds on 4 separate occasions, and this year we received a substantial amount, $12,819 in December of 1982. We do not know if we will receive any additional funding for this year, and when it may arrive, which makes planning difficult. Employees who deal with this program on an ongoing basis indicate that the state ACP section of ASCS does not have difficulty in getting out the funds, and look to the federal program for a solution to this problem.

The district has many activities that encourage conservation. We recently held our annual soil stewardship breakfast, we participate in the annual farm-city tour, the county fair, demonstrate no-till corn, conduct youth activities, and various other endeavors to encourage conservation efforts in our county.

However, we could not be nearly as effective without the ACP money, and we look to it as a backbone of the conservation effort in our county. The ACP provides incentive for farmers to participate in conservation efforts, the results of their efforts encourage others to participate, and the conservation of our soil is enhanced for our generation and others. In recent years our participation has dwindled as costs have increased and funding has remained constant. Whatever you can do to increase the amount the county receives will greatly enhance our efforts and effectiveness.

I applaud your interest in the conservation effort and urge your continued diligence on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Dorothy L. Steelman,
Chair, Anderson Conservation District.

Logan Conservation District,
Russellville, Ky., May 26, 1983.

Senator Roger Jepsen,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry and Environment, Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir: Supervisors of the North and South Logan Conservation Districts are pleased that you have seen fit to visit Kentucky along with our own Senator Huddleston to receive testimony on the proposed "National Program on Soil and Water Conservation". We Conservation District Supervisors feel this matter is of utmost importance, and welcome the opportunity to express our views on the subject.

In our area of responsibility, soil erosion from sloping cropland is the most serious natural resource concern. A large percentage of Logan County is prime farmland and our farmers vitally need to protect this resource. We wholeheartly support the National Program concepts of priorities and targeting for critical food and fiber producing areas such as ours. We feel that areas of the country which do not qualify for targeting should continue to receive an adequate level of assistance which will provide protection to their land.

We sincerely hope that the present and future administrations see fit to provide funds for the conservation programs which will furnish both technical and financial assistance at a rate which will encourage landowners to carry out the needed conservation measures. Serious consideration should be given to making enough assistance available to insure help for any farmer ready to participate in protecting the land.

We welcome state participation in carrying out an aggressive conservation program. We feel that the partnership of Districts, State and Federal is effective and should be continued and encouraged at all levels.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views.

Sincerely,

Eslye Cox, *Joint Chairman.*

IOWA HEARING

STATEMENT OF ROBERT C. BAUM, PRESIDENT, SOIL CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA ON THE REVISED DRAFT OF THE 1981 RCA PROGRAM REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT—JANUARY 1982

The Soil Conservation Society of America is greatly concerned about the science and art of good land use. Our members have been closely involved in the efforts to respond to the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (RCA). Society members at various levels, both within and outside of government, have participated in efforts to identify the nation's resources problems, how to solve these problems, and what results might be expected from the suggested solutions.

Many Society members, of course, have reviewed the 1981 RCA Program Report and Environmental Impact Statement. This letter provides you my comments as the Society's president. I am sure that individual members and several of our chapters will also submit comments to your department and/or to their respective state offices of the Soil Conservation Service.

We compliment USDA for the RCA effort. The Soil Conservation Service especially deserve commendation for its administration of this program at the state and local levels. We hope that comments received during this review period will be judiciously considered and that the future of our nation's soil and water resources will be prime concern, not the current economic constraints.

The RCA process at the state and local levels has provided a timely challenge and a limited but valuable financial incentive for conservation districts and state conservation agencies to review the status of our soil and water resources. Nearly every one of our nation's 3,000 conservation districts reviewed its local resource situation, updated its long-range program, and revised its priorities. At the State level, these priorities were summarized and used to formulate state soil and water conservation plans.

The RCA material submitted to USDA included a variety of priority objectives. Only a few of these have been recognized in USDA's 1981 Program Report.

INCREASED NATIONAL COMMITMENT NECESSARY

The conservation district and state summaries indicate that a new environmental commitment is necessary nationally. This commitment requires continuing leadership on the part of USDA in soil and water conservation, with increased funding to help maintain and where necessary restore the productive capacity of our soil and water resources.

The Harris Poll conducted in 1979 for USDA also indicated that the general public was concerned about soil erosion and the potential reduction in the productive capacity of our nation's soil and water resources. A majority of those polled expressed a willingness to contribute, as necessary, to a national conservation program.

The RCA process leading up to the program document now under review, by identifying local and state priorities, has resulted in additional contributions of funds and personnel by state and local governments to help landowners and operators conserve our land and water resources. But we cannot expect these contributions by nonfederal levels of government to increase rapidly enough nationwide to absorb the reduction in federal leadership called for by USDA's preferred program. Many state legislative bodies are now in special session to cut budgets or raise taxes and determine how to manage state affairs with less income. We expect state funding for natural resource conservation programs will decline in many states, along with expenditures for education, welfare, and other programs. Over the long run, however, it appears that with continued encouragement there will be increased funding from the state and local levels as well as increased staffing, for conservation programs. But we stress that this support will be offered at the state and local levels with the intention that it supplement USDA's leadership and contributions to the conservation effort. In no way will it serve as a substitute for a reduced federal effort.

Again we stress, the RCA process to date was extremely successful in focusing state and local attention on the status and condition of our resources and trends in their use. That focus sharply points to the need for additional effort at all levels of government, not less as the preferred program portends.

A QUESTION OF CREDIBILITY

At stake in this whole process, of course, is the welfare of our nation's soil and water resources, but also at stake is USDA's credibility within the agricultural community. The priority objectives set forth in the preferred program do not fairly represent the objectives identified by the public in its earlier review of RCA documents. If the program submitted to Congress following this review does not more adequately reflect the public feedback, then USDA's responsiveness to public concerns will be seriously questioned.

LIMITED PRIORITIES

We recognize the importance of the priorities listed in USDA's preferred program. However, we believe that the priorities are too limited, and they are causing concern at both the state and local levels, especially in areas where these priorities (serious soil erosion and upstream flooding) are not major problems. Among the water supply management problems not included are pasture and range improvement, water supply management, and forestry improvement.

We applaud the fact, of course, that soil erosion is given highest priority in the preferred program, but there is one important aspect of the erosion problem that is not addressed. This concerns the amount of soil loss that occurs in relation to the quantity of topsoil available. Soil loss at a relatively low rate per acre on a shallow soil may pose a much more severe problem from the standpoint of productivity maintenance than a higher rate of soil loss on a deep soil. Evaluating the quantity of topsoil available versus the quantity being lost may be a critical concern, particularly in areas where there is less topsoil to lose.

USDA also needs to direct more effort toward the control of agricultural land conversion. Continued production of food and fiber hinges on the retention of our prime and unique agricultural soils. Protection of agricultural land, therefore, deserves the same consideration as erosion control. Once farmland is converted to nonagricultural uses, it is, in most cases, gone forever.

IS A NEW COMMITTEE SYSTEM NEEDED

The proposals for local conservation coordinating boards and a state conservation coordinating board would require a maturation process to be as effective as the current boards and committees. Further, this new committee approach is viewed by some as a way for USDA to obtain greater control of state and local soil and water conservation programs from the Washington, D.C., level. I hope this was not the intent.

New boards are not needed. There presently exists a local administrative system that has proven successful for many years. Conservation districts have been recognized as a local, legal state subdivision, with locally elected or appointed officials responsible for setting local conservation priorities and giving guidance to a host of cooperating agencies and to Soil Conservation Service technicians. The leadership of these locally elected people has been the key to encouraging landowners and operators to plan and implement needed conservation programs. Their programs are designed to identify local problems and set priorities for solving them. In addition, county ASC committees are locally elected to administer the federal cost-share program. These two grassroots bodies have worked in concert, effectively accomplishing conservation objectives.

TURF BATTLE

Should these coordinating committee proposals be pursued, we suggest that a very serious and counterproductive turf battle could evolve that would disrupt conservation efforts at the state and especially at local levels.

LEADERSHIP COORDINATION

If additional coordination is needed in some areas, then those responsible for giving leadership to this coordination should extend efforts to see that it is accomplished. USDA could lend support to this by offering limited grants for training and coordination to state conservation agencies, grants similar to those made available through the RCA process. USDA could also give this support by insisting that USDA administrators coordinate their agencies' efforts closely at the state and local levels with the efforts of all other agencies concerned with soil and water conservation.

COORDINATION OF USDA PROGRAMS

Coordination of USDA programs is a long overdue objective and one that is strongly supported by many people. Conservation and price stabilization efforts within USDA have often been contradictory. Under one program, farmers are told to "plant fencerow to fencerow" without regard for soil capability. Other conservation programs provided cost-sharing and technical assistance to farmers who are willing to protect and restore marginal land with critical area seedings and other practices.

BLOCK GRANTS

We oppose the block grant proposal if funding for these grants is to be taken from existing programs. We emphasize that existing programs are not now adequately supported. New funding must be made available if this effort is to be successful. Additional reductions will severely limit the present, valuable national soil and water conservation effort.

TARGETING

Targeting is supported only if new funding is available. Also, national targeting should not be limited to the few preferred program objectives. State priorities should also be considered in some instances. This might include rangeland improvement, water conservation, improvement of forest lands, conservation of irrigation water, or priorities identified by state and local areas. We suggest that this special emphasis be supported by new funding and program capability as suggested in the Special Areas Program contained in the 1981 Farm Bill.

PRIORITIES

We suggest that priorities be established on a problem basis rather than by region or area. If soil erosion is a national priority, then it should be attacked throughout the nation where it is the priority of the state and conservation district, not in just a few selected areas where it is a regional issue.

We support your recommendation for basing cooperative actions on agreements between each governor and the secretary of agriculture. However, we assume that this has been done in the past by USDA working with the governor appointed and legislatively approved (or elected) state conservation agency. In addition, we hope that such a cooperative agreement does not dilute the assistance proferred under the memorandum of understanding between the secretary of agriculture and each conservation district.

We are pleased to see the recommendation that cost-efficient conservation measures should be emphasized. However, we must point out that there are instances where the economic benefit is difficult to establish and cost effectiveness in terms of long-term agricultural productivity should be the goal rather than dollar cost efficiency.

COORDINATION

We strongly encourage and continually work toward closer cooperation and budget coordination among USDA agencies, but we do not agree that this must be done with the new coordination boards described. As mentioned, this can be accomplished with additional leadership and emphasis where needed under existing programs through the presently established state and local agencies working with the appropriate USDA representatives.

TAX INCENTIVES

We support continued consideration of tax incentives as an inducement to increased use of conservation systems. However, we suggest that Congress may need to hold oversight hearings or pass clarifying legislation to make sure that the intent of Congress is carried out and that the Internal Revenue Service adopts rules supporting congressional objectives of increasing conservation on the land that serve as an incentive to land-owners and operators to apply conservation measures.

CONSERVATION SYSTEMS

We support emphasizing USDA assistance to farmers and ranchers for planning and installing conservation systems. However, if the present USDA soil and water conservation programs are reduced by transferring resources to targeting and grants, this cannot be done. Many conservation districts are presently saying that they now lack adequate technical assistance for planning and can give only limited and inadequate follow-up for installation of planned conservation measures. Growing state and local funding and personnel furnish considerable support to this effort but will not be able to fill the need that would exist if targeting and grants are implemented as proposed in your preferred program.

Farmers Home Administration loans supported by a conservation plan are a logical requirement, especially where funds are to be used for a soil and water conservation program. However, if the preferred program were to be implemented, this requirement could seriously delay the FmHA Loan program becuse many conservation districts do not now have adequate SCS technical assistance to prepare conservation plans in a timely manner. We find that this is not a new proposal because many FmHA administrators have had a longtime practice of asking loan applicants to obtain a conservation plan in order to make the best use of their loan and personal funds. This type of action needs broader and implementation throughout the country, however.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Targeting of research and educational services toward solving conservation problems that impair agricultural productivity is logical and strongly supported. Here, again, we anticipate that additional funding may be necessary to accomplish this objective. However, we feel it should not be done by robbing from another important USDA conservation budget.

There are limited research results during the past ten to fifteen years that answer questions pertaining to equipment usage, chemical applications and rates, management techniques, effect of residues on different soils, etc. It was precisely during this time period that farmers changed equipment size, rotations, types of chemicals, and management styles. No firm recommendations are available to the farmer wanting to use conservation tillage other than "try it on 5 or 10 acres and see if you can adjust to overcome problems."

Pilot projects to test new conservation methods are supported, based on additional appropriations and adequate recognition of the support for the pilot project by local sponsors and the assurance that the project is directed at solving locally identified conservation problems.

EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

Evaluating and analyzing conservation programs is necessary, but we urge that this be kept to a reasonable level. We receive many reports that there is too much USDA staff time given to evaluation and data collection and that this takes away from conservation planning and implementation. We continually hear from conservation district boards who say their technicians spend to much time on data collection, analysis, and planning and on meetings discussing these items. The RCA has determined the status, condition, and trends of the nation's agricultural capability very effectively. It assesses the national and worldwide need for food and fiber in terms of this nation's long-term productive capacity. It suggests programs that were developed with more of a view of today's realities rather than the vision necessary for sustained productivity levels, more of a view of administrative inequities than the recognition of a well-respected and practiced organizational relationship.

CONTINUED NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We believe that it is imperative that USDA continue to offer and adequate base level of national leadership in soil and water conservation. We are concerned that the preferred program, with reductions in the base toward targeting, block grants, and other areas, would result in inadequate technical and financial assistance in areas outside of targeted areas and in states where the block grant matching funds were not available, for whatever reason.

FUNDING FOR SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

We again reiterate that we must have a greater federal commitment for the conservation of our basic natural resources. Our nation's leaders need to consider our soil and water resources and our agricultural productivity as important to the nation's defense—just as important as airplanes, missiles, and submarines. I point again to the Harris Poll indicating the public's concern and willingness to pay for such a program.

The current federal expenditure of less than $5.00 per American per year on USDA's soil and water conservation programs is inadequate. The expenditure of one dollar for conservation programs out of each seven hundred expended by the Federal government is shortsighted and will result in increased food costs in the future. The priority ratio of one-seventh of one percent has dropped each year. The total budget for the United States keeps rising, while funds for conservation programs continue declining.

SOURCE OF FUNDING

SCSA's Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, in the May-June 1981 issue, feature a viewpoint titled "A Conservation Tariff" by Dr. Wesley D. Seitz, a professor of agricultural economics at the University of Illinois. Dr. Seitz suggested a tariff on agricultural exports. Export of agricultural products is very important and desirable, both to support farm income and to maintain the balance of trade with other countries. However, in many instances our cropland is suffering serious erosion, and we are accused of exporting our soil resources. A tax on these agricultural exports to be paid by the receiving country would seem an appropriate item to consider.

LONG-TERM AGREEMENTS

We strongly support the proposal for long-term agreements between USDA and farmers or ranchers. This approach has proved to be an effective way to get conservation on the ground, witness the very popular and successful Great Plains Conservation Program. A program based on long-term agreements and funded with new money—not money coming from our nation's existing conservation programs—is a logical way to emphasize and draw greater attention to serious conservation problems. Multi-year funding must be available, however, so that long-range planning can be accomplished.

MAJOR CHANGES NEEDED

The Resources Conservation Act has great possibilities if major changes are made by UDSA before it is submitted to Congress or, if not, by Congress itself. The two most needed changes are a national conservation commitment and a new, higher level of funding to show a greater concern for soil and water conservation by this nation. These actions should include the recognition of and support for the delivery system that has given successful leadership to our conservation programs for many years.

It is unfortunate that the political process has resulted in the preparation of a program that is limited to a predetermined budget level. USDA should have presented the status of our nation's soil and water resources, recommendations on how to solve these problems, and the results of these solutions as requested by Congress. This was the purpose of the resource studies and state and local priorities prepared under the RCA process. Congress could then determine the level of national effort that would be supported by their constitutents and that is necessary to protect the productivity of our soil and water resources.

Once again, Mr. Secretary, I commend you and your department for your efforts throughout the RCA process. The effort has produced a wealth of information that should prove helpful in our attempts to build a national commitment to conservation and care for our precious soil and water resources.

Statement of Russell Guhl, President of the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners, Shell Rock, Iowa

Senator Roger Jepsen and members of the committee: I am Russell Guhl, a farmer from Butler County, Iowa. I am active in soil conservation activities and am a district commissioner in the Butler Soil Conservation District. At the present time, I am President of the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners.

I am testifying today because I believe that soil erosion is a serious problem, not only for the farmer, but for all who consume food. I appreciate the opportunity to share some ideas with you.

For the nation as a whole, erosion is a problem on about 30 percent of our cropland. In Iowa, we have a problem on a little over 60 percent of our cropland. In eastern, western and southern Iowa there are areas where 70 percent of our cropland is eroding above tolerable levels. The USDA Cooperative River Basin studies recently completed in Southern Iowa showed that 57 percent of cropland is eroding above tolerable levels and in the Northeastern Iowa Basin 50 percent above. In Iowa we have, on the average less than 8 inches of topsoil left where originally we had 12 to 16 inches. Soil erosion is a major problem in Iowa.

Present technical assistance and cost-sharing funds from federal, state, and county sources are not adequate to meet the needs of the state. The soil conservation districts in Iowa working with the SCS have delineated seven target areas to receive increased erosion control. These seven areas involve 76 counties where over half of the land erodes above tolerable levels. If this trend continues, long-term production cannot be sustained. To revise this trend, we have supported the targeting of technical assistance by SCS and ACP cost-sharing by ASCS to these areas. Two of the areas have been approved and a third is scheduled for implementation in Fiscal Year 1984. We hope the other four areas can be approved in future years.

I believe we are making some head-way in the two approved target areas on addressing the erosion problem. Increased cost-sharing has helped but is a long ways from being adequate to meet the needs. In fact, with the available state and local cost-share funds plus the targeting funds, only 20 percent of total needs are met.

Estimates made by the SCS several years ago concluded that it would take $7 billion to pay for needed practices to control soil erosion in Iowa. Two-thirds of the cost was for terraces. Seven million acres of cropland in Iowa need terraces, but fewer than 1½ million acres are presently terraced. The job is less than one-fifth done and the current application rate is only 20 percent of rates needed state-wide to protect topsoil before it's lost. In the target areas, the rate has increased to approximately 30 percent, so there is still a long ways to go, but we believe targeting is helping and it is concept that needs additional financial support from Washington. I believe some of this support could be provided by funding the Special Areas Conservation Program included as part of the 1981 Farm Bill, which you sponsored. The Iowa Association supports this legislation and urges the appropriation of funds to give USDA (Soil Conservation Service, ASCS, and the Cooperative Extension Service) the opportunity to respond to special needs in certain sections of the country such as Iowa. This program would provide the accelerated technical assistance and cost-sharing for carrying our medium and long-term conservation agreements to install needed conservation practices.

The IASCDC urge you and the committees to support and to appropriate funding in Fiscal Year 1984 for the Mid-America Special Areas Conservation Program Proposal. This proposal sponsored by the soil conservation districts of Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri and resource districts of Nebraska, was forwarded to Congress in March 1983. Mid-America is a four state, 80-county area that includes 27.8 million acres in southwest Iowa, northeast Missouri, southeast Nebraska and northeast Kansas. The proposal calls for 48,350 long-term agreements to be developed over a 10-year period. The installation of all planned conservation practices is expected to cover a 20-year period. Accelerating technical assistance to accomplish the project objectives will require 346 additional full-time people. The estimated additional cost to apply planned practice is $1.7 billion with the local share being $418 million and the federal share $1.3 billion for the 20-year period.

I just do not see any way can get this needed conservation on the land without increased funding. I realize what a problem it is to get increased funding today in America. I realize the very serious financial condition our nation is in today. But I also know that we have an obligation to take care of our most important natural resource—our topsoil—to feed the yet unborn millions that are to follow after us. History shows that other civilizations have failed because they did not take care of their topsoil. Before people can do anything, they must eat.

The present national budget offers less than two-tenths of 1 percent for all the soil conservation efforts. This is not a strong commitment to soil conservation from the federal level. The conservation funds are a drop in the bucket compared to the entire national budget and what is needed to accomplish this important task of soil conservation.

I appreciate the opportunity to address this committee and I want you, Senator Jepsen, to know that I personally, and the Iowa Association, appreciate your efforts on behalf of America's agriculture and soil conservation.

[The following material was submitted by Don Johnson.]

(INFORMATION FROM 1977 NATIONAL RESOURCES INVENTORY IOWA INFO)

1. Sheet & Rill Erosion for cropland avg 9.88 T to A.
2. 19,720,000 A of Iowa's 26,431,000 A cropland needs conservation treatment.
3. 3,108,000 A of Iowa's 4,530,000 A. of pastureland needs conservation.
4. 1,072,000 A of Iowa's 1,487,000 A of forest land needs conservation.

Allocation of Conservation funds to Iowa from ASCS Federal Funds for 1983 Fiscal Year

Annual (ANA)	$5,259,000
Long-term agreements	751,000
Target area funding	1,760,000

National special project	$100,000
FIP	10,000
Total	7,880,000

Funds transferred to SCS for technical services from above allocation—$393,500.

In response to questionaires returned from counties, the major conservation and environmental problems to be solved are No. 1 Soil erosion by water and closely followed by water quality and wind erosion. The copping of marginal land is also considered a serious problem. Other problems reported were loss of wildlife habitat, need to improve timber production, need for additional water conservation and excessive tillage of cropland.

In responses from counties approximately 50 percent state lack of cost share funds is a major reason for unsatisfactory progress to solve serious conservation, environmental and other related conservation problems.

Over 90 percent of the counties feel the present organizational structure and technical responsibilities currently in place are satisfactory, to carry out conservation measures available through ACP.

In 1982 funds were earned as follows: 49 percent for terraces; 10 percent for no-till; 9 percent for windbreaks & restoration of windbreaks; 8 percent for waterways; 5 percent for permanent vegetation cover; 5 percent for water impoundment reservoirs; 4 percent for sediment or water control structures; and 3 percent for reduced tillage.

The remaining 7 percent was also applied toward enduring measures such as Imp Veg Cov, stripcropping, diversions, contour farming, animal waste control, tree planting and wildlife conservation measures.

[The following material was submitted by Russell Christensen:]

[Attachment No. 1]

IOWA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION—BACKGROUND PAPER ON FARM PROGRAMS

The Iowa Cattlemen's Association has several major concerns about federal farm programs and how they affect beef producers. First, it should be known that the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, and most of its members, have never advocated the continuation of farm programs, but we have some grave concerns about several provisions of both the 1982 and 1983 programs. Cattle producers do, however, recognize the need to reduce surpluses.

The overall objective and purposes of a crop acreage reduction program and its implications for the beef industry are bothersome. It is our understanding that the primary objective of the farm program is to reduce feed grain acreage in an attempt to reduce surpluses of feed grains, and that soil conserving crops or vegetation be grown on the idled or set aside acres. Many cattle producers are already doing this without subsidization. A typical cattle producer produces pasture, hay, or smaller grain crops on some of his acreage in order to produce forages or grasses for his cattle. We acknowledge that this is done voluntarily. However, this product receives a small corn base acreage in the program when previous cropping history is used in making this determination. In addition, most cattle producers have viewed this production as a way to achieve long lasting maximum production without exploiting their soil resources. This belief is probably why cattle production has long been known as a way to practice soil and water conservation without relying on public finances for assistance.

So, in effect, the cattle producer is penalized as compared to other farmers who have planted their entire acreage to feed grains. Why should others be paid a premium to do what the cattle producer has been voluntarily doing for years? The Iowa Cattlemen's Association feels strongly that this is a clear cut case of discrimination against producers who are already contributing to the overall well being of agriculture and doing their part to maintain our nation's precious soil and water resources.

The attached document clearly illustrates this point in financial terms. During the 1982 season a farmer who raised 80 acres of corn, 60 acres of soybeans and 20 acres of pasture or hay as compared to the farmer who raised 100 acres of corn and 60 acres of soybeans lost $301.95 per acre for maintaining good soil conservation measures. On the second 10 percent for 1983 an additional $249.70 is lost making the two year total $551.65. The average levels per acre for the two years is $275.82. Obviously, pasture or hay production does not come close to producing enough to offset this loss. Even when applying a cash rent value of $100 or $150 per acre as income from these acres, the non-grain acres are placed at a severe disadvantage.

The Iowa Cattlemen's Association feels justified in raising this as a major point of contention.

This aspect of the program was recently reviewed at the annual business meeting of the 15,000 member Iowa Cattlemen's Association. The membership unanimously passed a resolution asking that partial credit for pasture, hay or small grain crop acreage be included in each farm units corn base. Perhaps these acres could be adjusted based upon total digestive nutrients (TDN) produced from these non-corn acres. For example, if corn is 80 percent TDN and alfalfa or pasture is 50 percent TDN, then alfalfa or pasture acres could be given 0.625 per acre as compared to the corn acreage in determining the corn base. Also, why shouldn't there be loan privileges for hay or silage?

Soil conservation is one of, if not, the major issue facing Midwest agriculture. Far too many acres of a high degree of slope have been converted from hay or pasture to row-crop production. Regardless of tillage practice, some of these severely sloping acres cannot have an acceptable soil loss when intensively row-cropped. The beef industry may be the best vehicle available to address this serious problem. A farm program that penalizes farmers for producing other than row crops will be an incentive to convert more pasture and forage acres to row-crop production. Should a federal farm program discourage this? The ruminant animals has the unique ability to convert grasses and forages to a high quality edible protein. Beef cattle conserve soil better than other ruminants because they do not graze as close to the soil surface as do other species.

There seems to be a lot of discrepancy between counties in administering the program. Yields vary greatly from farm to farm in some counties. We acknowledge that each producer is able to verify his actual yield prior to harvest. However, since up to 1982, in recent years there has not been a grain acreage reduction program and there was little incentive to verify yields. The livestock producer who feeds his grain to livestock does not have scale tickets to verify his yields from previous years. The grain farmer can do this. Yet, the cattle producer often realizes higher yields than grain farmers because of crop rotation, reduction of soil erosion, and improved soil tilth resulting from the spreading of manure on cropland. Since a producer must prove his yields for three or five years, the livestock producer with a projected yield much lower than that of surrounding farms can do little about it for the next three years. This, too, is a disincentive for program participation on the part of livestock producers.

In addressing some of the inequities that farm programs have dealt the cattle industry, some secondary effects also need to be considered. Cattle producers are known for their independence which probably comes about because cattle production is a high risk capital intense business. Today we have fewer cattle producers, and with them have gone a proportionate number of agri-business which formerly served them. There are obviously several factors responsible for this trend. One of them appears to be the competitive disadvantage that government farm programs place on cattle producers forcing them to dig deeper into their equity each year that there is a program.

Attached is a copy of a resolution which was referred to. This is the official policy of the Iowa Cattlemen's Association on government farm programs.

FARM PROGRAM DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FARMER WHO MAINTAINS LEGUMES OR GRASS FOR BEEF PRODUCTION

A

160 Acres

80 Acres of Corn **20 Acres of** Pasture or hay	**60 Acres of Soybeans**

B

160 Acres

100 Acres of Corn	**60 Acres of Soybeans**

1982 FARM PROGRAM APPLIED INDIVIDUALLY

Both farms 110 bu. avg. yield
Sealed at $2.90 per bu. + 15¢ deficiency payment

A	B
72 acres corn X 110 bu. = 7920 bu	90 acres corn X 110 bu. = 9900 bu.
7920 bu. X $3.05 = $24,156.00	9900 bu. X $3.05 = $30,195.00

$30,195 - $24,156 = $6,039

20 acres pasture or hay ÷ $6,039 = $301.95

Cattlemen lost $301.95 per acre for maintaining soil conservation measures.

1983 FARM PROGRAM ON SECOND 10 PERCENT

$1.50 per bu. - diversion payment
$2.65 per bu. - loan rate

A	B
8 acres X 110 bu. X $1.50 = $ 1,320	10 acres X 110 bu. X $1.50 = $ 1,650
64 acres X 110 bu.=7040 bu.	80 acres X 110 bu.=8800 bu.
7040 bu. X $2.65 = $18,656	8800 bu. X $2.65 = $23,320
$19,976	$24,970

$24,970 - $19,976 = $4,994

20 acres pasture or hay ÷ $4,994 = $249.70

Cattlemen lost $249.70 per acre for maintaining soil conservation measures.

1982..............	$301.95
1983..............	$249.70
	$551.65

$551.65 ÷ 2 years = $275.82 avg. loss per acre

PUBLIC LANDS, PRIVATE LANDS, AND WATER

Whereas, the cattle industry and the Iowa Cattlemen's Association have never advocated programs of government subsidies and assistance to the cattle industry, and

Whereas, government grain acreage reduction programs do not directly affect beef producers, but do have an indirect impact on cattle producers; Therefore, Be It

Resolved, That the Iowa Cattlemen's Association does not advocate a government grain acreage reduction program, but recognizes that such a program is likely to again be implemented in future years, and Be It Further

Resolved, That if a paid grain acreage reduction program is implemented the Iowa Cattlemen's Association opposes unrestricted grazing of set aside acres during years of normal crop growth, but favors grazing of these acres beginning 30 days prior to the average frost date for a specific region, or a fair and just grazing rental fee could be established prior to that date; additionally, these grazing programs on set aside acres should be restrictive to prevent further encouragement of expansion of the nation's cattle numbers, and Be It Further

Resolved, That the Secretary of Agriculture in setting up the grain acreage reduction programs would be directed to utilize the past history of farmers who routinely follow a rotation program producing soil conserving small grain, forage and grass crops. As an example, corn suitability rating as used in Iowa, or another evaluation of productivity giving credit for TDN (total digestive nutrients) production for other than grain crops be used in determining base acreage. The farmer who has already been practicing conservation practices should not be penalized as compared to the farmer that has been disregarding good soil conservation practices, and Be It Further

Resolved, That the Secretary of Agriculture be directed to give corn silage producers the same farm program benefits as given to corn grain producers.

STATEMENT OF DAVID L. WILLIAMS, PAGE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, VILLISCA, IOWA

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee about the crisis in soil conservation. It is good to know that some in our national government are also concerned about soil conservation and our nation's future in this area.

I am Dave Williams from Vilisca, Iowa, a farmer, a Page County Soil Conservation District Commissioner, and a very concerned individual when it comes to the protection and abuse of our soil.

Philosophically I feel that we, as farmers, must take some of the blame for the situation that agriculture finds itself in today. We, as farmers, have chosen to follow the management systems under which we operate. We have changed from rotations to continuous row crops, we have abandoned the cow-calf and hill-pasture enterprise, we have chosen to ignore conservation practices that are available to us. In essence, we, as farmers, have lost the conservation ethic or failed to develop it. True, there are exceptions and examples of excellent soil conservation and land use, but not enough of them. There are farmers who are innovative, concerned, and operating their land in a fashion that reflects this, but there must be more of them.

Some of the blame for this crisis situation must be shared by other segments of society. A society whose economy forces the farmer to abuse the long-term value of his land for short-term gain is at fault. In order to protect the land and the soil, the farmer must be able to profit from the land without causing its destruction.

Government must accept some of the blame. The change in direction and emphasis from year to year sends confusing signals to the farmer. One administration suggests we plant fence row to fence row. The next is concerned about surpluses. One administration has the Resource Conservation Act (RCA), which helps define the most pressing need in conservation; the next wants to cut funding. We need consistency in commitment by the government in the conservation crisis. We need more funding for erosion control practices, more funding for technical help in the field. We need support for Extension Services to bring information and education to the farm public.

Being from southern Iowa, I am most aware of its, perhaps, unique situation. Much of this land is not adapted to continuous row crop. Some, at best, needs a long-term grass rotation with limited row crop. Some should never be cultivated. Probably two-thirds of the land in southwest Iowa, northwest Missouri, northeast Kansas, and southeast Nebraska is being abused to obtain that short-term profit. The past 6 to 8 years have shown an ever increasing amount of abuse. Facts show that in this four-state area, if operations continue as they now exist for another 25 to 50 years, yields may be reduced as much as 50 percent. Some land will be good for only grass or trees and not very productive for these uses. This is a grim statistic when related to an ever increasing population needing to be fed.

There are some bright spots. One of the best is the increasing acceptance of conservation tillage and no-till. This switch from the conventional "plow it all black" philosophy to reduced tillage can provide immediate soil conservation that, on many acres, will provide the protection needed to bring erosion down to an acceptable level. On all acres it will provide a marked reduction in soil loss. The emphasis on reduced tillage must not cloud the continued need for other conservation practices such as terraces. The tillage changes must be looked at in the light of conservation systems that may use several practices to totally control the erosion problem. Good management enters into the picture also. For example, no one should plant end rows up and down the hill or parallel to a waterway regardless of the tillage practice used.

An improved budget for soil conservation by our state legislature is a sign that the people of Iowa are recognizing the seriousness of the problem. This past legislative session increased the funding for the Financial Incentive Program approximately 50 percent to a level of about $8.4 million. This is another bright spot.

The federal government's targeting program for the above-mentioned, four-state area is also a move that shows an increased awareness of our problems. This will bring in more technical help and funding to react to the crisis. It is vital this type of support continues from the federal government at a level that will allow the program to be carried on to completion and not be put in the situation where interest is aroused but the follow-up does not come. Care must also be taken that areas other than targeting areas will continue to get a high level of support for needed conservation. Large area or group projects are good, but there is still much need for one-on-one work by soil conservation district personnel.

I urge you to support the RCA findings, Soil Conservation Service reports such as "Losing Ground—A Summary of the Report on the Soil and Water Resources of the Northern Missouri River Tributaries Basin", the study on "Impacts of Technology on U.S. Cropland and Rangeland Productivity" by the Office of Technology Assessment, Congress of the United States, and other findings. Help us move from a crisis situation to a controlled situation.

Many of us have as a heritage from our fathers a conservation ethic. Many must still be taught. The sooner we can move from the attitude that we inherit our land from our parents to the attitude that we are borrowing the land from our children the better off we will be.

VERMONT HEARING

Statement of Hon. Gordon J. Humphrey, a U.S. Senator From New Hampshire

Mr. Chairman: I first want to welcome you to the New England region and to express my sincere gratitude to you for providing an opportunity for the citizens of the region to be heard on the critically important issue of resource conservation. Although your visit will be a short one, I am certain that you will have ample opportunity to discover the beauty of our farmlands, forests and waterways, and consequently to understand our commitment to the protection of these God-given natural resources.

It was in fact a similar degree of commitment nationwide that led to the enactment of Public Law 95-192, the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. Passage of the R.C.A. signaled the willingness of the Federal government to share with the States and localities the responsibility for monitoring and protecting the croplands, ranges, pastures and forests which comprise two-thirds of our nation's total land area—approximately 1.5 billion acres. The importance of these resources to our nation's agricultural and industrial productive capacity cannot be over-emphasized, nor can the responsibility we must bear to ensure the continued beauty, health and productivity of this land for the benefit of future generations.

In accordance with the requirements of the R.C.A., the Administration has recently published its National Program for Soil and Water Conservation. Following a comprehensive appraisal of the nation's conservation needs, the Administration has proposed that the following three areas be given top priority in determining conservation activities and assistance for the next five years: reduction of soil erosion on crop, range, pasture and forest land; conservation of water used in agriculture; and reduction of damages caused by upstream flooding.

One particularly notable feature of the Administration's strategy is the establishment of a targeting formula to provide additional assistance to designated critical resource problem areas (as defined by the aforementioned national priorities). During each of the next five fiscal years, an additional 5 percent of technical and financial assistance funds devoted to soil and water conservation will be set aside for targeted areas. As a result, fully one-quarter of the overall Federal contribution to conservation activities will be designated for targeted regions at the end of the five fiscal year phase-in period. Because the farm belt and the Great Plains states will likely be the beneficiaries of this targeting program, Mr. Chairman, there will likely be cause for concern here in New England. I look forward to receiving an evaluation of this proposal by today's witnesses, and I am certain that this input will be of great benefit to you and your Subcommittee in studying the proposed National Program.

I am particularly pleased that two of my home State's leading authorities on conservation issues—Commissioner Steve Taylor of the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, and John Conner, President of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts—have been given the opportunity to participate in the hearing today. New Hampshire is richly endowed with forests and farmland, and I share with my constituents a deep sense of pride and commitment to this land.

Mr. Chairman, you are to be commended for your interest and leadership in the field of natural resource conservation. Today's hearing is the last in a series of nationwide field hearings you have conducted in order to gain first-hand feedback on the R.C.A., and particularly to receive comments on the Administration's proposed program. There is no substitute for the face-to-face feedback of our constituents, and I am confident that the testimony you have received will enable you to set a full and appropriate agenda for the hearings you will soon hold in Congress.

Again, I welcome you and offer you my full cooperation in addressing the issues which concern us both so deeply in seeking to protect and promote the productivity of our natural resources.

Statement of Hon. George J. Mitchell, A U.S. Senator From Maine

I am pleased that the Subcommittee was able to schedule and hold a field hearing in New England. The soil erosion problems of our central states have been well known since the 1930's. But the equally serious erosion problems of New England are less well recognized, even though they are among the worst in the nation.

Changing patterns of farming and food distribution nationwide have occurred since the days when New England was a major food producer. The irrigation of the west and the development of transportation and refrigeration combined to favor concentrated monocultural food production in warmer regions and transshipment to the northeast. The energy crisis of the past decade has had the effect of forcing our region to take account of transportation costs as a component of our food prices.

Simultaneously with the energy and transport cost increase, New England has seen moderate population growth in certain regions.

All this means that our states are again looking realistically at the possibilities and problems involved in returning to mixed farming, to the production of locally consumed produce of local farms, and to a future in which intensive agricultural practices will co-exist with smaller mixed farming operations.

These are sound developments. But underlying all of them is the need to conserve, preserve and restore the most fundamental farming resources: soil and water.

Unless we can protect our topsoil and prevent further erosion damage, New England farming is doomed to a slow but inevitable decline. Our region, and particularly the state of Maine, is characterized by thin soils overlying a rocky base. We do not have the deep topsoils that prevail in other regions.

While an erosion loss of five tons per acre may be acceptable for some parts of the nation, our local authorities in Maine have found that three tons per acre is the upper limit that can be lost to erosion before we risk long-term damage to farming operations.

Yet, 60 percent of Maine's cropland acres today are losing in excess of 3 tons per acre per year. The soil cannot sustain that rate of loss without drastic impact on our farmers, our food production and, ultimately on the charecter of the state and the entire New England region.

The problem is most severe in Aroostook County, the producer of Maine potatoes, our major agricultural product. More than 80 percent of Maine's cropland acreage is located in Aroostook, yet it is one of the sixteen counties nationwide which have been judged to have the most severe erosion problems, and which are in need of the most immediate conservation work.

The nature of modern farm economics has made conservation outlays and expenses difficult to justify and to finance. That is true whether a farmer is an active and enthusiastic soil conservationist or not. Most farmers, of course, recognize that their livelihood depends on the soil and that their efforts to maintain the productivity of the soil are essential and important components of farming practice.

But the reality is that in badly eroded regions, the costs of conservation may not be recaptured for many years. Even in normal farming practice, the costs of conservation, particularly in a poor harvest year, can mean the difference between maintaining operations at a profitable level or accepting a net income loss. Where drastic and costly conservation efforts are needed, the choice of making such investments is not an easy one, even for a profitable farming operation.

This outcome is not the result of the choices of individual farmers, freely made. It is the outcome of half a century of changing farming techiques, of greatly expanded demand, and of farm support structures geared almost exclusively to production rather than to conservation.

The tax code, for instance, does not permit deduction of legitimate conservation practices if they are higher than a percentage of farm income. That directly discourages the expensive and drastic efforts that are most needed in our most severely damaged croplands.

Federal assistance for erosion control is a small percentage of the federal aid forthcoming for production supports. That, too, has helped reduce the incentives for conservation and focused attention instead on production.

The petrochemical fertilizer revolution—the green revolution—focused on production with an outcome that was almost miraculous. Farm productivity in our time and in our nation has reached levels never before seen on the face of the earth.

But unless we can now begin to turn toward conservation as thorougly as we have embraced production, we risk losing the very foundation of that agricultural miracle—the topsoil itself.

This subcommittee is collecting information and evidence about the immediate need of farmers to conserve badly eroded soils. But in addition to that task, I hope the subcommittee will consider the need to balance our agricultural production policies more evenly with conservation policies. We cannot expect to continue intensive cropping practices without also doing the essential tasks of protecting and rebuilding the soils in which our abundant crops are grown.

CALEDONIA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
St. Johnsbury, Vt., June 27, 1983.

Senator PATRICK LEAHY,
U.S. Senate, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR: Thank you for informing us of the hearing in Brattleboro on June 24. Although unable to attend, our District does have some concerns we think you should consider.

First, we are afraid the national program will overlook the concerns of individual states and regions. Vermonters are in a better position to set priorities here than are people in Washington. We realize that excessive soil erosion must be the number one national priority. However, USDA needs to recognize the special problems we have in New England. While our total soil loss may not be great compared to other areas, the impact that loss has on our thin, fragile soils may be devastating.

Clean water is probably top on our priority list in Vermont. We rely on a pure environment for so much of our economy that we cannot afford to let our water quality efforts slip.

We also feel that targeting of USDA resources should be broadened to include the special problems of regions such as New England. Above all, we cannot afford to have the base level of USDA assistance lowered to the point where that assistance becomes ineffective.

Thank you for soliciting our imput on this issue.

Sincerely,

ROLAND SIMPSON, *Chairman,*
Caledonia County Natural Resource Conservation District.

BENNINGTON COUNTY
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
Bennington, Vt., July 7, 1983.

Senator PATRICK J. LEAHY,
Dirkson Office Building
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: This letter is written testimony on the National Program for Soil and Water Conservation. We would like it to be part of the official record of the congressional hearing held in Brattleboro, Vt. on June 24, 1983.

The Bennington County Natural Resources Conservation District (BCNRCD) was established in 1946. BCNRCD is made up of five supervisors and one advisory supervisor. All supervisors are or were active farmers in Bennington County. Three supervisors have been on the board for 20 years or more, Howard Wilcox is a founding member. Robert Graf is a state representative, Merritt Hewitt, Jr. was a state senator. All board members are members of the Farm Bureau, William Wicks and Carl Fuller are county directors. Board members practice good soil and water conservation.

As a conservation district we are concerned as to how the National Soil and Water Conservation Program will affect us and our cooperators. We do agree that targeting of funds to the worst areas is a good idea, but would like to see some changes in the way targeting is carried out. We feel targeting money should come from "new money" not the existing funds which are now just barely supporting base-level assistance. We think conservation priorities should be set regionally; not nationally. Every area of this country is different and has different resources to protect. For example, New England, Vermont, has fragile shallow soils. One inch of erosion does much more damage to our soils than it does to midwestern soils. We would like to see all areas control erosion to the tolerable limit, not just to 5 tons per acre per year; which is too much for Vermont. Our farm base is dairy oriented which usually calls for more water quality type of programs and assistance. Vermont has some of the cleanest waters in the country and we would like to keep it that way by controlling agricultural runoff of both soil and manure. In Bennington County we are finding that conservation tillage or "no-till" is doing an excellent job of controlling erosion. But farmers can't afford new no-till equipment. They rely on organizations such as BCNRCD, SCS or ASCS to assist in cost-sharing or equipment purchase and rental to county farmers.

Bennington County has only about 150 farms. We are concerned about the loss of our farms and farmland to other uses. There are several programs to use for farmland protection but we would like to see it possible for farmers to make a profit. If farming was profitable we would not loose our farmland and young farmers could get into business.

Presently BCNRCD, three other conservation districts and three regional planning commissions are applying for an expansion of the George D. Aiken RC&D Area. We would like to see additional support for funding for the RC&D program. With RC&D we would be able to serve more farmers and communities with sound, long lasting conservation programs.

Our concerns are well addressed in Governor Snelling's letter to Honorable John Block dated December 30, 1981. We are enclosing a copy of his letter.[1]

Sincerely,

ROBERT GRAF,
Chairman,
HOWARD WILCOX,
Vice Chairman,
MERRITT HEWITT, JR.,
Supervisor,
WILLIAM WICKS,
Secretary-Treasurer,
CARL FULLER,
Supervisor,
WILLIAM STROHMAIER,
Associate Supervisor.

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[1] Not received by committee.

FRANKLIN COUNTY
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
St. Albans, Vt.,

Senator PATRICK J. LEAHY,
State Street, Montpelier, Vt.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: The Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation Supervisory Board is comprised of five local landowners. Each is a dairy farmer with experience in this field ranging from ten to thirty years. The board members also are serving or have served in various capacities such as State Senator, Town Selectmen, Extension Service Advisory Board, bank and co-op trustees, etc. Therefore, we feel the need to present written testimony to the Senate Hearings pertaining to the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act Program Report.

It is the policy of conservation districts to promote, improve, preserve, and protect the nations valuable natural resources through the use of effective conservation programs. We, like all other conservation district boards, feel this to be an important national priority.

The soil, water, and related natural resources of the Northeast are essential to our regions' economy. These resources are under tremendous pressure not only for agricultural production, but also for urban and industrial development, waste disposal, and transportation. The increase of land use resulting from these pressures has added to our needs for soil and water conservation programs and for retaining and/or improving the status of the Northeast agriculture.

We support the preferred program with its emphasis on state and local leadership roles and federal block grants. However, we also agree with the statement by the Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture, "this redirection of technical and financial assistance through the targeting and reallocation of base level assistance does not adequately address the soil and water resource problems and needs of the Northeast states and has resulted in substantial reduction in federal assistance to the area."

We request therefore that the United States Department of Agriculture revise the criteria for targeting and allocation base-level assistance to more equitably meet the needs of the northeast region.

Identifying areas of our nation that have the most critical soil and water conservation needs and targeting the program efforts to those areas ignores the divergent resource problems across the nation. It is our opinion that individual state concerns would be better addressed if priorities were set by each state to reflect their specific needs.

Vermont's first priority might be water quality whereas soil erosion, the number one national priority might be our second priority. But this does not imply that soil erosion is not of vital concern. One inch of soil eroded from Vermont land may be more devasting than a loss of one foot of soil in the Midwest. Therefore, in recognizing the uniqueness of the Northeast and our important contribution to our nation's agriculture, it should be realized that our conservation priorities are not necessarily the same as other parts of the nation.

VERMONT FARM BUREAU, INC.,
Montpelier, Vt., July 5, 1983.

Hon. PATRICK J. LEAHY,
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington D.C.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: We were unable to attend the Soil and Water Conservation Subcommittee of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee's hearing on soil erosion problems that was held in Brattleboro on Friday, June 24, 1983. However, the Vermont Farm Bureau would like to submit the following written testimony:

Vermont Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families who join together to develop and carry out policy from the grass-roots level. More than 4,200 Vermont families are represented in the fourteen county Farm Bureau organizations. Soil conservation and the protection of prime agricultural soils are of extreme importance to our members.

Vermont Farm Bureau supports American Farm Bureau Federation policy regarding conservation, which was adopted by the voting delegates of the member state Farm Bureaus at the 1983 annual meeting in January. That policy is as follows:

"We recognize the importance of maintaining a productive soil resource. We believe that this can best be accomplished through:

"(1) Voluntary programs using cost-sharing and tax incentives;

"(2) Properly funded educational and research programs;

"(3) Emphasis directed at the most critical erosion problems;

"(4) Strongly urging farmers to keep their soil losses within acceptable limits;

"(5) Making use of present agency personnel to provide technical assistance;

"(6) Programs being directed locally by elected soil conservation commissioners; and

"(7) Committing a greater portion of government expenditures to on-farm conservation efforts."

The specific policy of Vermont Farm Bureau adopted at our November, 1982 annual convention speaks to control of the conservation districts:

"Whereas, we believe that the control of the Natural Resources Conservation Districts should remain in the hands of the landowners,

"Be It Resolved, that Vermont Farm Bureau favors the continuance of the present system for election of district supervisors, rather than tied to the general election.

"Vermont Farm Bureau also encourages more farmers to become actively involved, to ensure their keeping control of a much-needed program."

In another related area, the Vermont Farm Bureau would like to make the Subcommitteee aware of streambank erosion problems on the Connecticut River during flood stages at certain times of the year. We believe that the Army Corps of Engineers could survey these areas and develop a plan of action to preserve the prime agricultural soils along the river. While we recognize that this is a specific area of concern, Vermont Farm Bureau would also like to inform the Subcommittee of the need for ongoing programs for attacking problems of soil erosion at the farmer level in all areas.

Vermont Farm Bureau feels that erosion control should be considered as our highest priority, however, we are concerned that USDA budget proposals do not reflect such a priority selection. Less than five per cent of the total soil conservation budget is now being used to cost-share erosion control on cropland with an excessive erosion problem.

Finally, accurate data on the status of soil conservation have been developed and updated on a regular basis. We feel that these studies and the accompanying data should be put to good use at the farmer level. Money should be re-allocated from data gathering to actual cost sharing of soil conservation methods on the farm. We do not think that this data need be updated every five years, and urge that the interval for appraisals required in Public Law 95-192 be lengthened to at least a ten-year interval.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY F. BUSKEY, *Executive Director.*

ORLEANS COUNTY
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
Newport, Vt., June 23, 1983.

Hon. PATRICK J. LEAHY,
U.S. Senator,
State Street, Montpelier, Vt.

SIR: I am writing in behalf of the Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District to respectfully submit our comments on the RCA hearings that were held on June 24, 1982 in Brattleboro, Vt.

I am a lifelong resident of Vermont having operated a dairy farm in West Glover from 1947 until 1973. In 1973 I sold the farm to my daughter and son-in-law. Since 1977, I have been a member of the Orleans County Conservation District and since 1976 a selectman for the town of Glover.

The county I represent is a large dairy producing area. We have approximately 450 dairy farms and are the fourth largest milk producing county in New England and New York State. As you can see agriculture makes up a major portion of our economy.

We support the RCA national program for soil and water conservation but feel it should be fine tuned to recognize the problems of Orleans County Agriculture. Water quality improvement and soil erosion are the two major problems in this county. The landscape in this area is comprised of many lakes and streams. A majority of farms lack adequate manure handling systems whereby animal wastes eventially reach bodies of water causing water pollution. Another problem in this area is soil erosion, our fields are small and steep with thinly mantled soils. With only a small amount of soil erosion these soils will be unusable for crop production.

We realize that monies for soil and water conservation programs are being targetted to specific high priority areas and we support this concept. In addition though we feel a base level of assistance should be maintained for all areas of Vermont.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN URIE,
Orleans County Conservation District Supervisor.

GRAND ISLE COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
AGRICULTURAL CENTER,
North Hero, Vt.

Senator PATRICK J. LEAHY,
State Street,
Montpelier, Vt.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: The Grand Isle County Natural Resources Conservation District Supervisory Board is presenting written testimony to the Senate Hearing concerning the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act Program Report.

The Grand Isle County Natural Resources Conservation Board is publicly elected and entrusted with the responsibility of directing and coordinating the conservation program in Grand Isle County. This board consists of two apple orchardists and three dairy farmers who also serve as leaders in local government, school boards, fire department, and civic organizations. These individuals bring to the board a wealth of knowledge, experience, and genuine concern for the conservation and wise use of natural resources.

They financially support and endorse several national organizations which are working on research, education, information, and legislative reform in the areas of natural resources and agriculture. The board's number one priority is to preserve, protect and enhance agricultural land and to see that agriculture in the Northeast remains healthy and prosperous.

The Northeast's soil, water, and related resources are essential to the region's economy. Along with agricultural demands these resources are subjected to pressures from urban and industrial development, waste disposal, and transportation. For these reasons our needs for a strong, viable conservation program have been intensified.

We are in favor of the preferred program which stresses state and local leadership roles and federal block grants. We support targeting, however, we feel it should be fine-tuned. We are in agreement with the Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture when they state, "this redirection of technical and financial assistance through targeting and reallocation of base level assistance does not adequately address the soil and water problems of the Northeast States and has resulted in substantial reduction in federal assistance to the area."

It is our belief that the United States Department of Agriculture should revise its criteria for targeting and allocating base level assistance to more adequately meet the northeast's needs. Each individual state is in the best position to accurately determine its priorities. The Northeast has some specific concerns over fragle shallow soils and water quality.

This region has in the past been called upon to serve as a major food supplier. It may well be that in the near future the country will again look to this region for a major contribution in food production. Water shortages in other areas of the country are approaching critical proportions. The Northeast with its temperate climate and ample rainfall is a likely candidate to step in and expand its contribution to the nation. The Northeast resources and agriculture are not only important in terms of today's economy but in assuring our country's future needs will be satisfied.

This District Board thanks the Department of Agriculture for their work in presenting this complete package concerning the soil and water conservation problems. This Board also appreciates their recognition of the Soil Conservation Service's vital contribution, support, and involvement in conservation efforts in the Northeast. We would hope these efforts are to be continued.

Respectfully submitted,

ALAN KINNEY, *Chairperson,*
Grand Isle County NRCD.

Sunset Hill Farm,
Wells River, Vt., June 23, 1983.

Senator Patrick J. Leahy,
Federal Building, State Street,
Montpelier, Vt.

Dear Senator Leahy: In response to your letter of June 3rd requesting our views on conservation matters important to Vermont, and inviting us to your hearing in Brattleboro on the 24th.

We cannot attend in person. As dairy farmers with cows to feed next winter, we must do our haying and corn planting when the weather permits. However, I do wish to write for the hearing record as a Vermont dairy farmer on a small father-son family farm operation. As I have for several years, I continue to serve my neighbors, fellow farmers, and landowners as an elected supervisor of our Conservation District as well as an elected County Committeeman for ASCS.

We feel that Soil and Water Conservation should be a national effort to meet the conservation needs of this great nation—All of the nation, not just a few selected places that may encompass great areas that can come up with flashy and lurid displays of man's rape of the land as he has raped the land on the Midwest plains. The needs of Vermont and the Northeast as a percentage of the total conservation needs of the nation are small, compared to the gross tonnage figures of soils washing and blowing away in other large states. But the quarter inch of topsoil lost in Vermont is far more critical here than several inches would be to the deep soils of the feed-grain states. The percentage conservation needs of Vermont and the Northeast are fully as acute as in other areas. Further, the problems of Vermont are most often not man-made, but are due to extremes of slopes, shallow and fragile soils—coupled with the economic necessity for most of us farmers to use as many of the scarce cropland acres as possible—to grow feed for cows so as to supply the cities with nutritious dairy products. Also, we do not have the immense Mississippi River system to absorb and carry off any erosion sediment pollution (with its contamination potential). When sediment gets into our smaller streams up here, it has a major effect on water quality, especially downstream where large concentrations of people live.

This matter of water quality has been demoted in the RCA priority ratings. Flood damage can be a very serious concern in parts of the rest of the nation, as shown by the recent sensational media coverage of the suffering of flood victims in the South and in Utah, etc. The actual impact that routine Soil and Water Conservation Best Management Practices may have on these types of catastrophes is minimal in scope. However, ordinary SCS practices here in Vermont can and do have a large impact on both upstream flood damage and on water quality—and we feel that the issue of water quality may be the most important by a large margin.

The RCA process pointed out that the public was concerned about the conservation needs of the nation as a whole. However, the USDA summary brochure of the RCA process is not a true expression of the feelings of the public or of conservation minded people who work with the land. The summary judgment as to the nation's conservation needs appears to be far removed from common sense, justice, and equality—bearing very little resemblance to the expressed wishes of the participants, the public. A look at the bar graph shown on pages 14–15 of the USDA summary brochure shows the last item (No. 20, about 20 percent of the responses) was the least desired of the "options" presented in the questionnaire. What is now actually being proposed is exactly what was the least wanted of all the options—reducing the basic long-standing SCS program of technical assistance all over the country (regardless of the needs of any particular area)—so that money can be poured into spectacular displays of possible cures for man-made waste of the land—rewarding poor conservation management. In those areas, feed grains are grown at a great cost to the land in permanent damage. Profits per acre far exceed any return possible on our fragile soils here in Vermont and the Northeast, where we use the land mostly to grow grass for cow feed—a practise that is by far the best conservation measure for the land—a continuous cover crop.

The people voted on No. 13 as "Targeting more USDA funds—". I am certain from hearing the comments made during the RCA meetings in the area that those voting all meant and thought that they were voting for more funds, meaning additional funds as available—certainly not by taking away the basic SCS program of technical assistance to farmers and landowners.

We have said for many years—as have our various conservation organizations, on several occasions—that the nation needs to spend more on true conservation of our land, not less. Conservation should have a higher priority in the spending of the taxpayers' dollars. In spite of being faced with a deficit problem, recent actions in the Congress have been very enheartening in that increases for conservation have been introduced. Small increases to be sure, but increases. This seems to point out that our representatives in the Congress do themselves feel that conservation must have a higher priority.

In the SCS program, we are not talking huge government giveaways, grants, or monstrous structures. We are talking plain down-to-earth technical assistance from dedicated people who work with the soils and know them and their limitations. SCS has been the single example of a successful government agency that works in a three-way partnership of federal, state and local, and has for over 40 years here in Vermont. I have been pleased to be a part of that partnership, which never had to use a club to get conservation done. SCS in Vermont has led, advised, educated, and shown by example how conservation can reap benefits for the landowner as well as the public. Progress has been slow from the point of view that it does make for instantaneous sensational reports and statistics to satisfy the media hunger. But it is leadership and education, not dictatorship which breeds rebellion and the urge to bilk the programs. SCS as the technical brains and assistance and ASCS as the arm to supply cost-share incentives have been working together here in Vermont in a very cooperative partnership. We understand that this cooperation does not exist in some areas of the nation.

Conservation is getting done, perhaps slowly, but voluntarily and permanently. In our area, for example, we finally persuaded one farmer to plow across the slope and not up and down as he had for years. We did not club him or threaten him. We did it with education and offering technical assistance. That farmer is still a friend of SCS and ASCS. We led another farmer into a stripcropping practice where it was needed. This will be a demonstration for other farmers—not with a lot of ballyhoo, but quietly. We know that other farmers will look and ask and think about it for themselves, making their own decisions and not yielding to threats by a government agency. These things have been typical landmark successes to us supervisors in the district, to the local SCS conservationist and his staff, and to ASCS in this county.

I know that our Conservation District, our Vermont Association of Districts, our State Conservation Council, and others have written to you and your committee with some specifics. I have tried to outline some of the more personal feelings of this farmer and his neighbors who actually love the land and want to conserve it. We all feel strongly that any effort to reduce the basic SCS technical assistance program is a very great crime against the land, and wholly against the wishes of the public. In the various areas of different needs—with the help of special projects and funding for specific needs of each state—we feel that the real common sense meaning of "targeting" can be accomplished with justice and equality.

As a fellow Vermonter and as our representative in Washington, we urge your support to that end.

Sincerely,

David C. Stevens.

P.S. Again, too long! Dave

WASHINGTON HEARING

Statement of Hon. Walter D. Huddleston, a U.S. Senator From Kentucky

Mr. Chairman, the principal focus of the hearing today will be the implementation of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977—legislation that, I am proud to say, I sponsored.

To date, the Subcommittee on Soil and Water Conservation, Forestry, and Environment has held several hearings on this issue, including field hearings in my home State of Kentucky.

The witnesses from whom we have heard provided remarkably similar testimony. The message we have heard is this:

The administration's announced soil and water resources conservation program is inadequate;

The Federal Government has a responsibility for national soil and water conservation problems and the States cannot address these problems without the help and substantial commitment for assistance from the Federal Government.

The administration's budget proposal for conservation programs is short-sighted and does not provide the minimum needed for an effective conservation program; and

The administration should carry out the provisions of the 1981 farm bill that require the Department of Agriculture to develop policies that protect prime farmland from unnecessary conversion to non-farm uses.

In view of the testimony we have heard in the hearings so far, I believe Congress should seriously consider requesting the administration to withdraw the announced program and resubmit a new program that adequately addresses our national soil and water resources conservation problems.

Unless such a step is taken, I am fearful that, over a period of years, the cumulative effect of this administration's proposals for conservation programs would be devastating.

We cannot afford to gamble with our Nation's greatest resoruce, our productive farm and forest land.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses. They represent a wide spectrum of organizations and considerable expertise in conservation issues. Their testimony will help Congress in its review of the administration's conservation program and provide guidance on what remedial action by Congress may be required.

STATEMENT OF LARRY WERRIES, DIRECTOR, STATE OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

For over two years, the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses has been a hotly debated public issue. Actually, there are two types of farmland conversion. One type, private transactions among willing sellers and buyers of land, is emphatically not within the purview of state and federal governments. The second type of farmland conversion is the acquisition of farmland by governments, either by purchase or through the exercise of the power of eminent domain.

Typically, government agencies acquire land for a variety of public purposes: highways, parks, airports, and flood controls for example. Government agencies also issue permits and licenses to use farmland for such things as solid waste landfills and electric power generation. While these public works are necessary and while they provide indispensable public benefits, their improper design and location can cause or lead to additional, unnecessary farmland conversion.

Because they have shown no propensity to do so on their own, state and federal government agencies should be required to design and to locate projects that take an absolute minimum of farmland and that encourage the least amount of additional land use change. Whenever possible, existing public facilities must be renovated, not replaced. New facilities should be designed to be sufficient, not to include unnecessary or excess capacity. Non-farm development proposals should identify sites as close as possible to existing non-farm developments.

Without such restrictions, government agencies become active participants in land markets. Their actions arbitrarily influence property values and the desires and opportunities of private landowners. In the case of farmland, government's regulation of itself is the only way to protect the right of citizens to enjoy their private property.

Today, I would like to discuss the need for implementing the National Farmland Protection Policy Act as expeditiously as possible. However, before I do that, I would like to give you a little background on farmland protection—Illinois style. According to the National Agricultural Lands Study, Illinois has 23.8 million acres of cropland and 80.1 percent of this is classified as prime by the Soil Conservation Service. From 1967 to 1977, Illinois lost 106,000 acres of farmland per year to non-agricultural uses. Just recently the Cooperative Crop Reporting Service indicated that Illinois lost 100,000 acres of farmland in 1982. Because of the importance of agriculture to Illinois' economy, these losses prompted Governor Thompson to issue Executive Order Number 4 on July 22, 1980. This order required that the state's nine capital development agencies prepare policy statements on how they would consider farmland in their development projects and how they would mitigate adverse impacts of proposed projects on farmland. The Governor designated the Illinois Department of Agriculture as the agency responsible for implementing the policy contained in the Executive Order. On August 19, 1982, Governor Thompson signed Public Act 82-945 "Farmland Preservation Act" into law. The Act codified the terms of the Executive Order in the Illinois Revised Statutes.

The Farmland Preservation Act created an Inter-Agency Committee on Farmland Preservation which is composed of the nine state development agencies and chaired by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The purpose of the Committee is to provide a forum for the nine development agencies to discuss common problems in the formulation and implementation of their policy statements. The Committee has been instrumental in the development of: guidelines for preparing studies of agricultural impacts, a conflict resolution process, the definition of irreversible farmland conversion, and a mutually agreeable policy statement format.

The Farmland Preservation Act directs the Department of Agriculture to review state capital development projects for compliance with the Act and report its findings to the Governor's Office, President of the Senate, Minority Leader of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Minority Leader of the House, and the proponent agency if the agency does not follow its policy statement. In response to this directive, the Department prepared guidelines for the study of agricultural impacts. The study is conducted when a State development project does not conform to the Act and the proponent agency is unwilling to bring the project into compliance. A report based on the study is issued, and contains information such as: the value of foregone crop and livestock production, lost property and sales tax revenues, any direct impacts on agribusiness, and a brief discussion of probable secondary impacts which may result.

Within the Department of Agriculture, farmland protection activities are carried out by the Division of Natural Resources (DNR). DNR personnel staff the Inter-Agency Committee and work with the various state agencies. This requires DNR personnel to deal with the agencies not only on a month-to-month basis in the Committee meetings but also on a day-to-day basis in the review of state development projects. It is the intent of the DNR staff not only to implement the Act but also to endeavor to change the attitude of state government with regard to farmland. In the past, agencies have viewed farmland as a commodity to be marketed rather than viewing it as a finite resource. It is encouraging to note that one of the largest users of farmland in the state, the Illinois Department of Transportation, has taken the position that farmland is a major consideration in the construction of highways and has modified design and location of highways to use less farmland (and incur lower costs) than they have in the past.

Two examples of how the Illinois Department of Transportation protects farmland from highway construction are U.S. 51 from Bloomington to Decatur and Illinois Route 121 from Lincoln to Morton. U.S. 51 is a 46 mile segment originally designed for full access control and using 2,000 acres of farmland. The highway was redesigned for partial access control and will require only 700 acres of new right-of-way. Illinois Route 121 is a 42 mile segment designed at Interstate standards with 1,030 acres of new right-of-way. This highway will be constructed for partial access control and will require only 820 acres of new right-of-way. In light of increased federal and state taxes for road building, this level of agency cooperation is essential to the continued protection of farmland from excessive conversion by state action. It is important to note that construction costs for roads designed to protect agriculture may be from 25 to 50 percent lower than original estimates.

Highways are not the only public projects which can be designed to protect farmland and save tax revenues. Recently, a flood control project was proposed in northeastern Illinois. The design preferred by the proponent agency would have employed a series of small dams to retain flood waters on approximately 700 acres of productive farmland. Negotiations among state and federal agencies resulted in a decision to widen and deepen the river channel through town and control flooding with concrete retaining walls. In addition to not using farmland, this project will use fewer public funds.

In 1980, the site selection process for a new coal-fired electric generating plant was conducted by the Rural Electrification Administration. Three sites of about 1,000 acres were under consideration; they contained approximately 90, 50, and 20 percent prime farmland as defined by the Soil Conservation Service. Aside from the quality of the farmland, all site selection criteria were approximately equal. The Illinois Department of Agriculture urged the rural power cooperative to use the site which contained the least productive land rather than the 90 percent prime site which was preferred initially. Ground was broken on the 20 percent prime farmland site in the fall of 1982.

In addition to working with state agencies, the Department of Agriculture also works closely with units of local government that wish to adopt farmland protection programs. Upon their request, the Department provides technical assistance to these local governments in setting up farmland protection programs utilizing zoning, comprehensive planning, agricultural districting, the Soil Conservation Service's Land Evaluation and Site Assessment System, and other techniques. Although this type of technical assistance is not directly called for by the Act, it is extremely important in fostering a favorable climate for farmland protection. If farmland protection in Illinois is to be successful, local units of government must become actively involved in seeking ways to resolve the problem and it is to this end that the Department provides technical assistance upon request.

As we all know, the National Farmland Protection Policy Act was passed in December 1981 as part of the 1981 Food and Agriculture Act. The Act designated USDA as the implementing department. The Secretary delegated the authority to the Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment who in turn designated the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as the agency responsible for implementation. The Act was to have become effective six months after becoming law. However, it has been 18 months since the Act was passed and it has not been implemented. Why? All we know is that SCS has written several drafts of rules and regulations for implementing the Act. It is our opinion that SCS has earnestly endeavored to implement the Act in accordance with the intent of Congress. There appears to be an obstacle somewhere. I submit that the United States Congress has the ability to identify that obstruction and to remove it.

The National Farmland Protection Policy Act in no way infringes upon private landowners' property rights. The Act is designed to insure that federal government development projects do not needlessly convert farmland. As in Illinois, this is an effect by government to regulate itself. It is a recognition that farmland and agriculture are important to the nation's economy. We are dealing with two important resources: farmland and tax revenues. As elected officials and appointed officials, its incumbent upon us to use both resources wisely.

In closing, I would like to say that states such as Illinois should be supported by federal authorities in their effort to protect farmland. This is an effort which requires cooperation at all levels of government with major decisions resting at the lowest level possible. It is important that Federal agencies regulate their activities to insure that local programs to protect farmland are not negated by actions of the federal government. Billions of additional tax dollars and millions of acres of private property can be saved in the immediate future if the federal bureaucracy is required to support Illinois' and other states' efforts to protect their land. This can be accomplished with administrative rules and regulations as required under the National Farmland Protection Policy Act which prohibit the proposal or evaluation of projects that consume too much farmland. Consequently, we call for the federal government to become a partner in the effort to protect farmland at the state and local level. It should be a full partner, not a silent partner. The National Farmland Protection Policy Act is the avenue to full partnership. The Act should be implemented without further delay.

STATEMENT OF CLARENCE DURBAN, VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. Chairman. Members of the Committee. I am Clarence Durban of Plain City, Ohio. I am a grain farmer there, and a member of my local soil conservation district board of supervisors. I serve as the national vice president of the National Association of Conservation Districts. It is a pleasure to come before you today to testify on the current status and future needs of the Nation's soil and water conservation programs. They are programs of considerable interest to the 17,000 men and women who serve the Nation's 2,932 conservation districts.

Conservation districts have played a central role in the intense evaluation of soil and water conservation programs that was initiated by the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. It has been a long, difficult and, often, frustrating process. But it has also been rewarding. We weren't always happy with what we found, or with the findings of others involved in the process. But I think there is little doubt that the conservation program is stronger and more capable today as a result of that effort.

A major benefit of the RCA process came from the intense study of the land itself. With the facts gathered in the 1977 National Resource Inventories, the Soil Conservation Service demonstrated to the Nation something that most conservation district officials already knew from watching the situation in their own district: America's agriculture had changed dramatically—in both technological and economic ways—and soil conservation systems and practices that had been adequate in previous years were no longer appropriate to the new situation. The land was being farmed much more intensively without adequate soil protection, and the result was an unacceptably high level of soil erosion.

The response to this problem has been widespread. In many cases, individual farmers have led the way. But they have had the strong support of some segments of agribusiness, the Land Grant Universities, along with the Experiment Stations and Extension Services; the conservation districts; and all the agencies of USDA. Local conservation districts have gained additional help and support for their programs from county governments, state legislatures, and federal agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency.

The result has been the rapid emergence of new soil and water management techniques that are better adapted to today's farm technology, and which are effective in saving soil and water. Best known are the new conservation tillage methods which, in a variety of combinations, are helping farmers save money, time and energy by reducing field work while, at the same time, dramatically lowering soil erosion through the use of plant residues on the surface of the soil throughout the year.

None of these systems is the "final" answer, but the growing interest in them indicates that American farmers are more than willing to use soil conservation practices when we can find practices that are effective and feasible.

During the years since the passage of RCA, however, federal soil conservation programs have been continuing to struggle for the funding support needed to meet the demands placed upon them. The RCA process was designed to produce a final program proposal, in which the President told Congress what would be needed in terms of federal programs and budgets to meet the soil erosion challenge. What Congress got, instead, was a program designed to keep federal spending as low or lower than in the past.

I will give Secretary Block and the leaders at USDA credit for one thing. The final RCA program was a creative, innovative way to find methods of helping the conservation programs be as effective as possible under a reduced level of funding and commitment from the federal government. Once it became clear that the RCA program would be required to meet the budget limits imposed by OMB rather than the needs of America's land as identified by the RCA Appraisal, there was little USDA could do but minimize the damage that might otherwise occur to the federal effort.

We in conservation districts were disappointed with that outcome, as were most people involved in soil and water conservation programs. The question now is "where do we go from here?" We would like to offer some observations that we hope will be of help.

First, we encourage Congress to provide ample oversight so that the 1982 National Resource Inventories, currently in the final stages of checking, will be thoroughly analyzed and publicized, both within USDA and in outside organizations. We can assure you that NACD will be taking a close look at those new data, and publicizing their meaning. We think they will show some new facets of the soil and water resource situation. We predict that soil loss has been reduced in some parts of the country due to the new emphasis on conservation tillage. In other areas, due to the plow-out of marginal lands, we may be in far worse shape than the 1977 survey indicated. Just how these trends will balance each other is impossible to know until the data are released. Those results will be very important in establishing future program priorities and targets.

Next, we need to keep this information flowing in the future. Our organization feels strongly that a periodic look at the Nation's soil and water situation is essential if we are to establish good conservation policy. On the other hand, we are aware of the amount of time and effort on the part of SCS field people that is needed to gather the necessary data.

We support legislation to extend the RCA process so that periodic repeats of the National Resources Inventories are carried out every 5 years, with an interpretive analysis completed within a year after each NRI. We feel that having USDA go through the process of developing a formal program as part of that cycle is largely unnecessary, however. We think that having a periodic resource situation update that tells us where the programs are meeting needs—and where they are falling short—will be enough guidance for the policy-making process.

One of the more controversial aspects of the RCA study was the degree to which USDA studied the federal priorities and programs, and characterized the whole soil conservation effort as a "from the top-down," federally-directed effort. We think the history of the soil conservation movement indicates that the reverse has been largely true, and that much of the strength and success of soil conservation programs has been their local and state orientation.

One of the products of this "top-down" approach has been a strong focus on "targeting" USDA assistance to areas where soil erosion is worst. If carried too far, or on too simple a basis, we have some concerns with that approach.

For example, a majority of the soils in the midwestern States, upon which intensive corn and soybean production occurs, do not have excessive soil erosion. Yet, the topsoil layer is thin and soil erosion, even at modest rates, can deplete soil productivity steadily over time. These soils, which are the key to our national future, are prime targets for cost-effective conservation. It may be more important to assist farmers in protecting them than to subsidize the farming of marginal cropland that is more highly erodible.

As USDA attempts to make its limited funds go further and accomplish more—a policy we certainly support—we feel they should pay more attention to state and local priorities that have been established. We feel this could add the fine-tuning that they will lack if they continue to focus simply on a few federally-defined priorities. If this is going to be a truly cooperative federal-state-local program, we need to cooperate in priority-setting as well as program implementation.

We think the evidence is strong that the soil and water conservation program is steadily becoming more cooperative in nature. For example, as federal funding for conservation programs has been diminishing—or holding steady, to be slowly eaten away as inflation robbed its purchasing power—state and local governments have been filling the gaps created.

In 1975, state and local appropriations totalled $85 million. By 1983, that figure stood at $185 million. Eighteen states have enacted and funded some type of financial incentive program for soil and water conservation in that short period. Most of those programs are cost-sharing programs to help landowners implement soil conservation, water quality, or reforestation practices. Other incentives include low interest loan programs, tax incentives, and purchase of development rights for farmland protection.

State and local funding for conservation district operations and technical assistance has also risen dramatically in recent years. Ohio, Texas, Utah and North Dakota all have programs where state funds help offset the loss of Soil Conservation Service personnel that has damaged conservation program efforts in recent years.

Ten years ago, there were few people actually employed by conservation districts. Most of the technical and administrative assistance the district utilized was provided by SCS or other agencies. Today, over 5,500 employees work for the nation's 2,932 districts. The majority of these (2,421) are secretaries, with an additional 1,074 classified as conservation technicians. In the last five years, the total number of conservation district employees hired with state and local funds has increased from 4,120 to 4,419.

Even with these increases, the conservation districts feel they are understaffed to meet the demands being placed on them. In NACD's 1983 District Employees Survey, districts estimated that over 3,600 more employees were needed to carry out the activities planned at the district level.

Since the passage of the RCA, 39 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have published long-range soil and water conservation plans. The remaining states have plans at some stage of development. These plans demonstrate readiness and willingness of State Soil Conservation Agencies to take the lead in developing and implementing sound conservation programs geared to the situations, priorities, and desires in each state. We feel this is a partnership that USDA programs ought to utilize more directly. The matching grants program, authorizing by the 1981 Farm Bill, was designed to assist this partnership, but it has not yet been funded by Congress. NACD strongly supports the funding of the grants program as a way to continue to build support from state and local government.

This growth in activity at the state and local level must not however, be read as a signal for USDA to cut back on their total commitment to soil and water conservation programs. Both the State Soil Conservation Plans and the District Personnel Needs are estimated on the basis of the ongoing federal programs. They identify the additional work that must be done, and the added program capability needed to do it. Any cutback by the federal government negates these plans and increases the need for additional inputs.

In working with state and local government, there are several things that USDA could do that would substantially improve their programs.

First, they could provide support for the implementation of state soil conservation plans. The best vehicle for this would be the grants program authorized in the 1981 Farm Bill, but if Congress does not fund this provision, USDA could use other authorities to accomplish at least some of this purpose.

USDA should aggressively move to be ready to implement all the conservation programs authorized in the 1981 Farm Bill. This would include: Grants to states and conservation districts; Special Areas Conservation Program; the Conservation Loan Program; and, the Farmland Protection Policy.

Rules and regulations for each of these authorities should be prepared and published, and budget proposals sent to Congress that would ask for needed start-up funding.

USDA should do everything within its administrative authority to remove all federal incentives that tend to underwrite the cultivation of marginal land. The clear legislative direction on this issue is contained in S. 663, which we encourage Congress to enact at the earliest possible time.

In addition, USDA should bring proposals to Congress that would:

Create a voluntary, certified set-aside program, so that farmers who wish to seed down parts of their cropland to grass, legumes or trees could do so without exposing themeselves to the risk that their cropland base would later be adversely affected or that they would have to set aside additional lands in order to meet mandatory set-aside programs;

Create a permanent approach to commodity program administration that would let a farmer establish his "base acres" on the basis of his normal crop rotation, then keep that base established, through reporting of actual crop acres and participation in the voluntary set-aside—even in years when there was no mandatory diversion or set-aside programs in effect;

Once these programs have been altered so that voluntary conservation farmers are no longer economically penalized by the effects of the commodity programs, USDA should require participants in the USDA income support programs to manage their land under conservation standards acceptable to the local conservation district;

Enable the Secretary to enter into long-term agreements with farmers to set aside highly erodible lands in a paid set-aside that would convert those lands to grass or trees and keep them in that use for many years;

Create a set of tax incentives for farmers, including investment tax credits and a "Green Ticket" tax bonus incentive for farmers who are willing to establish and maintain a system on their land that meets an annual certification requirement established by the conservation district;

Create a special fund for federal soil and water conservation activities that would receive up to one-half of the revenues currently accruing to the federal government from the leasing of offshore federal oil and gas lands. In this way, the federal legacy of non-renewable mineral and energy resources could, in its declining decades, help prepare us for centuries of dependence on our agricultural productivity;

Establish a general national policy goal of achieving a profitable commercial agriculture using agricultural and production technologies that result in little or no net degradation or permanent damage to the soil and water resource; and,

Establish strategies that will allow USDA conservation programs to actively contribute toward implementing the nonpoint source pollution control plans developed by conservation districts and others over the last decade.

Mr. Chairman, this is an ambitious agenda. We know that. But we think that the protection of the vital resource base that underlies and supports America's most basic industries is a serious enough matter to merit such national attention. You can be assured that our organization will actively aid you in reaching toward these objectives.

JOINT STATEMENT OF NORMAN A. BERG, SENIOR ADVISOR AND ROBERT J. GRAY, DIRECTOR OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT, AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, we appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and discuss soil conservation policy.

The American Farmland Trust is a private non-profit organization dedicated to finding ways to conserve our nation's top soil and protect agricultural land from conversion to non-agricultural uses. Our efforts include initiatives and activities in both the private and public sector. The majority of our projects involve work directly with individual land owners and state and local officials. In the past three years AFT has developed a membership of 25,000 individuals from all parts of the United States.

As you know, Mr. Chairman in the past year AFT has undertaken an extensive, indepth analysis of our soil conservation problems and programs. We believe our conservation project is one of the most detailed analysis of these programs ever undertaken by the private sector.

AFT's basic goals, as we designed and carried out the soil conservation study, were to:

(1) Evaluate the effectiveness of traditional costs-sharing and technical assistance programs for controlling soil erosion;

(2) Analyze various voluntary incentives for implementing soil conservation practices;

(3) Investigate current use, and prospective uses, of mandatory controls specifying goals or methods of soil erosion controls including regulatory and cross compliance provisions;

(4) Interview farmers in areas experiencing severe erosion to determine the response of farm operators and absentee landowners to the current soil conservation programs, and to test their reaction to possible new policy initiatives; and

(5) Develop policy recommendations for submission to Congress and to state governments.

I am pleased to report, Mr. Chairman, we are nearly completed with the project and will be releasing our findings and recommendations very soon. Because of the importance of this hearing, we thought it would be appropriate to share with the Committee this morning a number of the more important findings and recommendations that will be more thoroughly discussed in the project's full report.

Specifically, we would like to discuss two facets of our project that we believe will be of particular interest to this committee. We will present some of the results of the extensive field interviews we conducted with about 700 farmers and ranchers in six important agricultural states. Secondly, we want to go over a number of the policy recommendations that we believe are promising and necessary if the nation's public conservation programs are to become more cost-effective and responsive to contemporary conservation needs.

Let me go directly through our most surprising conclusion. We strongly believe that soil erosion can, and should be reduced significantly to or below acceptable levels on the vast majority of agricultural land now experiencing excessive erosion losses. Furthermore, AFT believes that this achievement can be attained in a relatively short period of time, and without additional funds for traditional conservation programs if the basic thrusts behind our policy recommendations are incorporated, one way or another, into contemporary conservation programs and policies. There are no bold, new initiatives or program changes behind this conclusion. Our confidence rests in the Department of Agriculture's growing ability to identify conservation needs, and our hope that a much more systematic and effective approach to the administration of our public conservation programs will soon be adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Returning now to the findings of AFT's survey, we would like to focus on what farmers and ranchers told us they were doing, and what they were thinking about soil conservation. We interviewed about 700 farmers and ranchers in six study areas. Information on these areas is presented to Table 1 of our testimony.

Table 1. Characteristics of Counties in Which the Study Sites Are Located: 1978 Census of Agriculture

Characteristics	Washington Co. Colorado	Marion Co. Iowa	Haywood Co. Tennessee	Grant Co. Wisconsin	Jackson Co. Illinois	Perry Co. Missouri
	Study Area-County					
Average Farm Size (Ac.)	1,534	237	354	249	255	219
Average Market Value of Products Sold	$56,060	46,567	27,370	50,993	30,834	25,853
Percent of Value of Products Sold from:						
Crops	44%	28%	91%	9%	72%	32%
Livestock	56%	72%	9%	91%	28%	68%
Principal Crops and Percent of Cropland Planted to Each:						
1st	Wheat 36%	Corn 39%	Soybeans 57%	Corn 37%	Soybeans 46%	Hay 18%
2nd	Corn[a] 4%	Soybeans 21%	Corn 15%	Hay 37%	Corn 18%	Corn 18%
3rd	Hay 4%	Hay 13%	Cotton 5%	Oats 9%	Hay 8%	Soybeans 17%
4th	Sorghum 1%	Oats 4%	Hay 4%	Soybeans 1%	Wheat 7%	Wheat 10%
Dominant Livestock Enterprises	Cattle/Calves	Hogs	-	Dairy	Hogs	Hogs/Cattle
Tenure:						
Full Owner						
% Farms	39%	52%	48%	66%	55%	70%
% Land in Farms	23%	31%	16%	53%	28%	53%
Part Owners						
% Farms	46%	31%	37%	21%	34%	23%
% Land in Farms	69%	48%	72%	33%	60%	41%
Tennants						
% Farms	15%	17%	15%	12%	11%	7%
% Land in Farms	8%	21%	12%	13%	11%	6%

[a] grown under irrigation

Source: 1978 Census of Agriculture

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Each interview took more than one hour to conduct. The farm owners and operators were asked to assess the efforts of public agencies to control soil erosion on agricultural land; to reveal what conservation practices they were using; and to describe how they felt about different public policies and programs that might be used to help them control soil erosion.

Our research design for the interviews involved a number of steps: The selection of specific agricultural areas; the selection within each area of study site, usually corresponding to a watershed; enumerating, sampling and interviewing farmers in each study site; and analyzing the collected data. We tried to build into our study as much diversity as possible in the land resources and the nature of agriculture found among the areas. All of the areas were characterized by high levels of soil loss.

To accomplish this objective, we met with SCS personnel and obtained National Resources Inventory data on a number of counties located in major land resource areas (MLRAs). Additionally, data on the nature of the agriculture in each one of the counties were obtained from the 1978 and 1974 census of Agriculture, and a series of meetings were held with Cooperative Extension, SCS, and SCS personnel in each prospective county.

Six study sites were selected in five MLRAs: Nixon Creek watershed in Haywood County, Tennessee; Rattlesnake Creek watershed in Grant County, Wisconsin; Coal Creek watershed, located between Warren and Marion counties in Iowa; the Ora-Bradley watershed area of Jackson County, Illinois; portions of the Menfro soil association of Perry County, Missouri; and the Cope Soil and Water Conservation District of Washington County, Colorado.

With the selection of the six sites for the study, interviews were conducted with representatives of public, agricultural agencies and private farm organizations. The purpose of these interviews was to gauge the form and extent of agency involvement in combating soil erosion in the county, and with the farmers and ranchers chosen for the detailed interviews.

The farm owners and operators we interviewed were engaged in a wide range of conservation practices. In our opinion, some of the more significant findings form the interviews involved the reasons given by farmers for using a particular conservation practice. The vast majority—70 percent—explained that the major reason for their using a particular practice was the clear expectation that the practice would reduce their operating costs. This finding contrasted sharply with the importance of farmers expectations of receiving cost-sharing funds and technical assistance from the Federal government. Only an average of 21 percent gave the availability of technical and/or financial assistance as the primary reason for adopting a certain conservation practice.

Once a conservation practice was in place, and if government funds had helped to pay for it, an overwhelming proportion of the farmers (71 percent) felt that the cost-sharing money should be repaid if the practice was not maintained.

With the exception of only one county, there was also strong support for government payments to take highly erosive land out of intensive cultivation. We view this as a clear signal that many farmers have not only noticed, but are concerned about the substantial acreage of marginal, highly erosive, land that has been coming into cultivation in recent years. Many farmers shared with us their fears that farming more and more poor land would be disastrous for the land, for grain markets, and for rural America in general.

We also found overwhelming support for the targeting of technical assistance and cost-sharing funds. Over 83 percent of the farmers interviewed agreed that assistance should be concentrated in the areas of the country where soil erosion problems are the most severe. Surprisingly, there was also strong support (63 percent) for targeting assistance even if it meant less money and technical assistance for other areas.

One of the key policy questions that we asked involved the issue of cross compliance, a term that has been used in reference to literally dozens of policy ideas. We found that much of the negative response among farmers and operators to this term can be traced to misunderstanding of it. When we asked farmers directly how they felt about one of the most extreme forms of cross compliance—farmers who grow crops on erosive land without conservation protection should not be eligible for participation in government commodity price support programs or other assistance programs—a clear majority of the farmers/operators supported this approach. Obviously, there is a clearer understanding and more of a general acceptance of this particular policy question than heretofore recognized by many conservation policy leaders both in Congress and the Executive Branch.

In keeping with the state of Iowa program, and other state and local programs, we also found strong support among the farmers we interviewed for the ability of an individual to recover damages when their property has been harmed by sediment eroding from land adjacent to their properties. Offsight damages seem to be a very real, continuing concern to many farmers.

And finally, on the policy side, there continues to be an extremely high rate of support for federal expenditures on soil and water conservation programs. In fact, the support for a continued federal role in soil conservation programs run almost 75 percent.

Our interviews produced a number of other important findings that we would like to bring to the attention of the Committee. In general, the farming operations taking advantage of available soil conservation programs tend to be larger in size than the average farm in the area, and tend to be operated by individuals who are older. Also, participating farms were, in most cases, livestock enterprises.

Farmers were basically well aware of their soil erosion problems, with a number of them reporting erosion on more than one third of the acreage they were operating. One of the more surprising findings that emerges from the interviews involved the amount of conservation work taking place on rented land. Although there was not a consistent trend in all six of the farming regions where the intreviews took place it was nonetheless clear that many farmers were using conservation practices on rented land. In the case of either minimum tillage or no-till production systems, it became clear that most farmers find it more practical and rewarding to maintain and use one set of machinery for all their cultivated land whether owned or rented.

I would like to turn now to a brief description of some of the major recommendations that will be explained in detail in the forthcoming AFT soil conservation report. We lay out in the report the reasons why AFT is decidedly optimistic about the prospects for substantial progress in conserving agricultural resources. We explain what we see as major new opportunities for advancing sound agricultural resource management systems. We highlight many areas of reserarch and analysis pursued patiently during the 1970's by the USDA which can and should now be used to great advantage by conservation program administrators. Conservation needs can now, for the most part, be identified reliably. Exciting new tools are becoming available to USDA and local conservationists for assisting land managers in selecting cost-effective conservation strategies compatible with their land, type of enterprise, and complement of machinery. We found all over the country that people working the land are discovering new ways to conserve soil, water, energy and labor. During this period of economic stress on the farm, much greater attention is being directed toward the role of conserving all kinds of inputs as a way to reduce cash production expenses. Most new conserving techniques also help save soil. Farmers are responding eagerly, and with typical Yankee ingenuity, to new conservation opportunities and technologies. They appreciate that conservation systems almost always conserve their money as well as their resources. Public concern and support for conservation programs continues strong, as does the support for conservation in state legislatures and the Congress.

Our optimism is based on the belief that all these positive themes can be focused with great success on new conservation opportunities. These factors can be shaped into powerful forces in support of new and more effective conservation policies and programs. AFT believes it is now possible to have a highly productive and responsive agricultural sector which also effectively and efficiently conserves the nation's land and water resources. Our program recommendations are offered with this goal in mind. We recognize, of course, that our recommendations are rough-cut, and will be improved and sharpened markedly as they become part of the on-going debate on conservation and farm policies. Also, we want everyone to understand that our recommendations build on the work of many other groups, agencies, and individuals who have struggled so conscientiously with these issues in the past. And last, no conservation policy proposal or set of initiatives should be expected to solve all conservation problems. No program will ever be so compelling and effective that all conservation problems will disappear. Our agricultural system is far too diverse and dynamic to expect such a miracle. AFT's recommendations should be judged in this light, not as the answer, but steps in the right direction. We don't need miracles to conserve America's soil resources, just more common sense and determination to farm wisely and administer sensible conservation programs.

When presented in the final report, AFT's recommendations will be grouped in eight general categories. These are:

I. The Need for a National Policy on Conserving Soil Resources;

II. Importance of Developing a Coordinated Conservation Program;

III. Characterizing and Identifying Conservation Needs and Opportunities on Agricultural Lands;

IV. Policy Strategies for Controlling Erosion on Fragile Soils;

V. Coordinating Conservation and Commodity Price Support Programs;
VI. Conservation Strategies on Moderately Erosive Lands;
VII. Improving Conservation Program Cost-effectiveness: The Role of Resource Inventories and Program Evaluation; and
VIII. Budgetary, Institutional, and Policy Concerns.

I would like now to present 15 of our major recommendations dealing primarily with the third, fourth, and fifth categories above. These recommendations lay out the heart of AFT's proposed new strategy for conserving soil and water resources.

I. NATIONAL SOIL CONSERVATION POLICY

Recommendation.—A national policy on soil conservation should be developed and adhered to by all agencies of the federal government. It should be the policy of the United States to assist land managers, farmers, conservation groups, and other private organizations to protect agricultural land from excessive rates of erosion. The basic goal of all federal activities in this area should be maintaining or improving the inherent productivity and quality of soil and water resources. The U.S. Department of Agriculture should be designated as the lead agency in coordinating federal conservation activities.

While there are hundreds of conservation-related programs annually spending several hundred-million dollars, there is no federal policy on soil conservation. There needs to be a clear and explicit statement of the goal for federal conservation programs. Without such a clear goal, it is not really possible to determine the adequacy of program activities or to evaluate the extent and type of new initiatives that might be advisable to reach the nation's goal for soil conservation.

With this recommendation, AFT is proposing that the U.S. adopt what is, in effect, a non-degradation policy for agricultural land resources. This same standard has been embraced by Congress in several other areas of environmental law and regulation over the last decade. It should be the policy of the U.S. government to support public and private efforts of all sorts to reduce soil erosion rates to levels where the long-run productivity of soil resources is maintained. Because our scientific understanding of the erosion-productivity relationship is incomplete, the USDA should rely on available soil-loss tolerance limits on individual soils as the best available estimate of the non-degradation goal for erosion control practices. (A greatly expanded effort to refine the accuracy of both the concept and measurement of soil-loss tolerances is called for elsewhere).

II. TOWARD A COORDINATED, NATIONAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Recommendation.—Conservation activities spanning dozens of programs administered by several agencies across the federal government should be systematically coordinated and balanced into an overall conservation program. Conservation needs should be clearly articulated in meaningful terms, as should the objectives of different conservation programs designed to address these needs.

Conservation issues raise long-term concerns which are best approached incrementally and consistently. Federal policies and programs, on the other hand, tend to shift abruptly and dramatically in response to perceived crises. When a sense of urgency is absent, programs sometimes languish in a sort of bureaucratic malaise. Change in the status quo is viewed suspiciously and often resisted. Because U.S. agriculture is so dynamic, this tendency for bureaucracies and established programs to resist change is a particular danger in the area of conservation.

A mechanism needs to be put in place as soon as possible to help guide the actions of the Congress and Executive Branch toward development of a coordinated, balanced, and complete conservation program. With the passage of the Resources Conservation Act, Congress sought just such guidance from the USDA. Unfortunately, the goal of the RCA process has not yet been reached. In our next recommendation, AFT urges this and other Congressional Committees to continue an active leadership role in trying to come to grips with this basic conservation problem.

Recommendation.—Appropriate Congressional committees should conduct a series of oversight hearings on how contemporary conservation program activities can be more effectively coordinated and balanced. The hearings should focus on widely recognized conservation program deficiencies other than funding levels. Institutional and policy issues should be examined, drawing upon the findings of the General Accounting Office, Congressional investigations, and private assessments of conservation policy. The Committees holding these hearings should widely circulate pertinent background documents explaining the goal of the hearings and the problems on which the Committee is seeking guidance. Background information should outline, at least in general terms, the types of recommendations and testimony that would be most helpful to Congress. Leaders of both parties in Congress should make a concerted effort to coordinate the activities of the several different Committees of the House and Senate with long-standing interests in conservation. Such leadership can help assure that Congressional input and actions progress without undue delay and in consistent directions.

Recommendation.—Private conservation, agricultural and environmental organizations with nationwide memberships should convene a task force to consider how state and local initiatives, both public and private, should be coordinated on a continuing basis with federal conservation programs. This group should consider ways to improve the responsiveness of federal decision-making processes to state and local needs, programs, and conservation initiatives. The findings and recommendations of this group should be communicated to Congress and the Executive Branch, along with concrete suggestions addressing how to achieve and sustain a higher degree of coordination and support between federal and state, local and private conservation activities.

III. CHARACTERIZING AND IDENTIFYING CONSERVATION NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Recommendation.—Conservation program activities and expenditures should be based on conservation needs.

Recommendation.—Cultivated cropland in the United States should be assigned on the basis of simple and measureable physical characteristics into one of three groups. This classification should be undertaken for the purpose of determining eligibility of land for various conservation and commodity price support program alternatives.

Recommendation.—Eligibility for alternative conservation and commodity price support program provisions for a given field of land should be based, whenever appropriate, on the land's classification. Other program parameters such as payment rates and cross compliance provisions should be set and adjusted annually according to land groups when such adjustments are advisable in order to maximize conservation and farm income support benefits.

Recommendation.—Land in group 1 should not, under any circumstance, be set-aside, diverted, or retired from cultivated crop production as requirement for participation in farm programs. Periodic production adjustment requirements and expenditures should be directed exclusively to land in groups 2 and 3, with particular emphasis on attaining high rates of participation in the program among group 3 soils.

IV. CONTROLLING EROSION ON FRAGILE SOILS

Recommendation.—The highest priority for conservation and commodity price support programs should be the elimination of excess erosion on group 3 soils through the conversion of this land to pasture, hay, range, or other stable land uses. Commodity price support programs should be relied upon whenever possible to accomplish this goal by offering farmers multi-year land retirement contracts consistent with production adjustment goals. For lands not covered by a commodity program, the Agricultrual Conservation or Great Plains Conservation Programs should be used to encourage the establishment of permanent vegetative cover on highly erosive land.

Recommendation.—A range of economic incentives should be offered to farmers to encourage the enrollment of group 3 lands in multi-year conservation contracts. For land included in a farm's commodity program base acreage, the incentives should include: (i) an annual or lump sum payment in cash or commodities; or (ii) favorable eligibility status for participation in other farm programs or other provisions of the commodity programs available to other land on individual farms. For group 3 land not now part of a farm's base acres and currently eroding excessively, the provisions and funding of the Agricultural Conservation Program should be modified as necessary to encourage the establishment of permanent vegetative cover under long-term contracts on the majority of these lands.

Recommendation.—The USDA should make a special effort to provide adequate assistance and tailored incentives to convert group 3 lands to stable land uses and allocate funds on a preferential basis, wherever state of local regulations or conservation programs have been adopted to also encourage this goal.

Recommendation.—Either through appropriate legislative or administrative initiatives, group 3 lands not currently included within a farm's commodity program base acreage should be designated as ineligible in the future for participation in commodity programs. The conversion of group 3 lands now planted in grass or pasture to erosive cultivated crop uses should also be discouraged through other penalties and provisions such as restricted eligibility for farm credit loans, crop insurance protection, and other publicly funded programs. Toward this end, the Congress should act expeditiously on S. 663, the so-called "Sodbuster Bill," as well as other legislative proposals pending before Congress aimed at discouraging the conversion of group 3 lands into cultivated crop uses.

V. COORDINATING CONSERVATION AND COMMODITY PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Recommendation.—To the fullest extent practicable, the USDA should attempt to balance the annual supply and demand of basic agricultural commodities through adjustments in the acreage of commodities harvested each year. Production control should be achieved through diverting Group 2 and 3 lands from cultivated crop uses for multi-year periods. The Department should strive to retain at least 15 million, and up to 50 million acres, in long-term retirement contracts under on-going commodity price support programs.

Recommendation.—Cultivated cropland in group 1 that is not subject to resource management constraints or erosion hazards should not be periodically idled as a requirement for participation in commodity price support programs. Instead, provisions should be introduced into the commodity programs to assure that necessary, periodic reductions in the supply of commodities are attained through the retirement of moderately and severely erosive lands in groups 2 and 3.

Recommendation.—When advisable, the Department of Agriculture should have the flexibility to include in multi-year land retirement contracts provisions stipulating market conditions that would permit farmers to replant diverted land. Farmers choosing to replant diverted acreage would be required to treat the newly planted land with an appropriate set of conservation practices which would, in combination, reduce estimated erosion on the land to one-fifth or less or its inherent potential to erode.

Mr. Chairman, we have included in our written testimony this morning 15 of more than sixty recommendations contained in our final report. Together, our recommendations would have a very substantial and lasting impact on our public conservation programs. In order to begin this process as soon and as decisively as possible, we would like to further recommend that the Department initiate a special pilot project testing the basic thrust of our recommedations in the next crop season. We at AFT have coined the acronym SCRAP for this project, or Soil Conservation Reserve Acreage Program. SCRAP would involve offering commodity program participants a multi-year land retirement option, targeted to highly erosive soils. In 150 to 200 sample counties, farmers would be granted an opportunity to enroll erosive cultivated cropland in 5 to 10 year contracts. The farmers would agree to establish and maintain the land in non-erosive grass or pasture uses in return for various incentives which would be established in accord with the basic provisions of next year's program whether it involves a PIK approach, or parcel diversion, or other methods to reduce production. The nuts and bolts of this project are laid out in detail in our report. We urge the Committee to carefully appraise the considerable benefits we think such as approach would produce for U.S. farmers, our soil resources, and society as a whole.

We have already taken more than our share of the Committee's time this morning and have emphasized the proper role of the federal government. However, state and local governments also need to strengthen their policies and programs for soil and water conservation on the non-federal lands of this nation. We are encouraged by the news that the Soil Conservation Task Force of the National Governors Association will soon communicate with the Governors of all 50 states their observations concerning the opportunities that states have in the area of soil conservation.

We thank you for the opportunity to appear today, and look forward to another chance in the near future to discuss with you in more detail the findings and recommendations contained in our report.

CONCENTRATION OF SOIL EROSION IN SELECTED STATES IN 1977 FOR MOST ERODIBLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS [1]

State	Millions of acres	Percent of State total	Millions of tons	Percent of State total	Average rate tons/acre/year
Illinois	1.7	6	76	41	45
Iowa	3.5	11	148	53	42
Kansas [2]	6.2	13	137	53	22

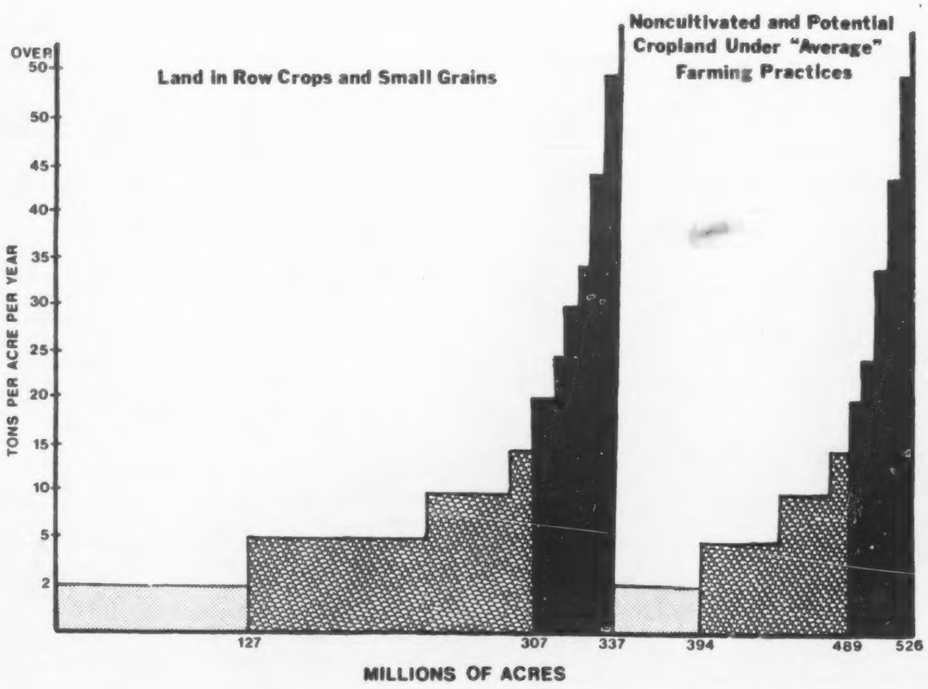
CONCENTRATION OF SOIL EROSION IN SELECTED STATES IN 1977 FOR MOST ERODIBLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS [1]—Continued

State	Millions of acres	Percent of State total	Millions of tons	Percent of State total	Average rate tons/acre/year
Missouri	3.1	8	131	53	42
New Mexico [2]	5.0	10	234	60	12
Oklahoma [2]	2.6	6	55	42	21
Oregon [2]	1.4	5	10	26	7
South Carolina	0.6	4	8	45	15
South Dakota [2]	2.3	6	49	39	21
Tennessee	1.2	5	55	55	48
Texas [2]	15.1	10	794	68	53
Vermont	0.3	5	3	56	9
Washington	1.1	4	25	44	24
Wisconsin	0.8	3	25	39	31

[1] Includes cropland, pastureland, rangeland, and forestland.

[2] Includes wind erosion.

Source: Soil Conservation Service/USDA, 1977 National Resource Inventory.



[The following article was supplied by M. Rupert Culter, National Audubon Society, see p. 350 for oral reference:]

[Reprint from Time magazine, June 27, 1983]

CARVING OUT A NEW DUST BOWL—SODBUSTING IS CHANGING THE FACE OF GREAT PLAINS FARMING

(By Robert T. Grieves)

Earlier this month 500-h.p. diesel tractors, brand-named Big Bud 525 and Steiger Panther, pushed 60-ft.-wide chisel plows into the gentle prairie around the hamlet of Winnett, Mont., quickly transforming what once was Wayne Bratten's 28,000-acre ranch into a raw wound of overturned earth. Eastern Colorado Wheat Farmer Emmett Linnebur became a part owner of the Crow Rock Ranch near Miles City, Mont., and used a fleet of ten supertractors to tear into 50,000 of its acres for wheat planting. In recent years, tractors have bulldozed some 6.4 million acres of marginal grasslands in Montana and Colorado and an estimated 27 million acres scattered across the rest of the U.S.

While this frenzy of rangeland transformation has made money for some, for others it has raised the specter of an environmental calamity. Explains Steve Meyer, executive vice president of the Montana association of conservation districts: "When you remove the vegetation on rangelands, you're depleting a resource. If steps aren't taken, we face the possibility of another Dust Bowl."

Critics of sodbusting, as the increasingly common practice of slicing grazing lands into wheat farms is called, say that most of the marginal land of the Great Plains cannot support commercial exploitation. With less than 20 inches of precipitation a year, the region is semiarid. These marginal soils where they are not too rocky or saline, are often too sandy for farming or are packed with calcium and lime. When over turned by plow blades, valuable topsoil only a few inches thick becomes vulnerable to wind and rain erosion; once gone, it takes decades to replace. The sodbusters are either big operators who buy land and plow on a major scale, or small ranchers who break their own land for a quick cash fix. "I want to make a buck," concedes John Greytak, 53, a former Datsun dealer and present grain operator who since 1974 has broken 250,000 acres of grazing land, mostly in Montana, and stores some 30 percent of his wheat production in giant bins (for which the Government pays him 26.5¢ per bu. each year). Robert W. Thomas has put more than 20,000 acres of northern Colorado rangeland under the plow since 1979 and claims to have made at least $1 million on the recent sale of a 9,480-acre tract of prairie land that he planted in wheat.

Sodbusters buy range-land at prices that are relatively low because of today's depressed livestock industry, plow and plant the wheat, then sell the cultivated land, sometimes to buyers unfamiliar with the region and the fragility of the range's topsoil. Since the mid-1970's, planted prairie tracts have shot up in value because of speculation in cropland as an inflation hedge and federal farm programs such as PIK (payment in kind).

PIK allows farmers to sell federal surplus grain if they agree to plant less wheat in a given year. If a farmer with 100 acres of wheat land wishes to apply for PIK, he must first have farmed the land for two years. Once his application is accepted, he can take some or all of the land out of production in the third year and ask the Government for, say, 80 percent to 95 percent of the grain that the land would have produced. The farmer can then sell that wheat for the highest price he can get. The national average this year: $3.50 per bu. Last week Agriculture Secretary John R. Block offered a plan to extend PIK to the 1984 harvest in order to make further reductions in the price-depressing wheat surplus.

While not directly affecting most speculators right now, the existence of PIK has helped encourage sodbusting. In one area of Montana, for example, undeveloped land that sold for $100 an acre recently fetched more than twice that price when tilled in wheat. Says Ronald Miller, a federal district conservationist: "As long as a person can come in and almost immediately double his money, the problem is going to continue."

Loans, federal subsidies such as deficiency and disaster payments, and price supports for crops help sodbusters as well as other agricultural producers. Entrepreneurs apply for price supports and, as required by federal law, take 15 percent to 20 percent of their cropland out of production. In effect, range plowers break prairie land that may have little agricultural value and collect money for keeping it out of cultivation. Says Bernie Spanogle, district forest ranger at the Pawnee National Grassland in Colorado. "People are farming the federal crop programs, not the land."

Though land-use regulation is the virtual preserve of state and local governments. Colorado Republican Senator William Armstrong has introduced a "sodbuster bill" backed by the Reagan Administration and the Montana Stockgrowers Association. A group traditionally opposed to land-use controls. It would deny federal payments of any kind for crops grown on highly erodible land. A companion bill is pending in the House. Local officials are also beginning to take action. A new law in Weld County, Colo, requires sodbusters to prepare a conservation plan and obtain a permit from the county commissioners. This spring Colorado strengthened an existing law that permits counties to enforce conservation measures and make violators responsible for destruction caused by their plowing.

For many residents of the northern Great Plains, such legislation cannot come soon enough. Edith Phillips, 71, of Weld County, is suing Sodbuster Thomas for $150,000 because of waves of dirt that she claims are blowing off his plowed acreage and onto her homestead. Says she: "There's nothing but dust out there. You can't breathe." Adomonishes Bill Brown, a Montana rancher: The Government shouldn't be subsidizing bad farming practices."

STATEMENT OF MARY KAY THATCHER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION, AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The American Farm Bureau Federation is the largest general farm organization in the United States, with membership in approximately 2,800 counties in 48 states and Puerto Rico. It is a voluntary, non-governmental organization representing farmers and ranchers. Farm Bureau members grow virtually every agricultural commodity produced on a commercial basis in this country and operate 75 percent of the nation's commercial farms and ranches.

Farm Bureau is pleased that the subcommittee is conducting hearings on the Resource Conservation Act (RCA). We urge further modification of the RCA program so it will better meet the needs of farmers and ranchers.

The following policy regarding conservation was adopted by the voting delegates of the member state Farm Bureaus at the 1983 annual meeting:

"We recognize the importance of maintaining a productive soil resource. We believe this can best be accomplished through: (1) Voluntary programs using cost-sharing and tax incentives; (2) Properly funded educational and research programs; (3) Emphasis directed as the most critical erosion problems; (4) Strongly urging farmers to keep their soil losses within acceptable limits; (5) Making use of present agency personnel to provide technical assistance; (6) Programs being directed locally by elected soil conservation commissioners; and (7) Committing a greater portion of government expenditures to on-farm conservation efforts.

"We support the retention of conservation payment programs operated by locally elected Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) farmer county and community committeemen.

"We recommend a federal program of cost-sharing through income tax credits for soil and water conservation practices and structures which contribute to enduring conservation and environmental enhancement by reducing the discharge of soil particles."

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"We favor lengthening the cycle of time required under the Resource Conservation Act for determining approval of conservation efforts."

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"We are in favor of long-term agreements because of their success in getting conservation practices installed and maintained on the farm."

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"We support additional incentives to encourage producers to put diverted acres into permanent soil conserving use.

"We oppose economic incentives to artificially stimulate producers to bring fragile lands under cultivation. Fragile grasslands are defined as those lands highly subject to wind and water erosion that have a projected erosion rate in excess of five tons/acre/year in the absence of soil conservation practices."

Mr. Chairman, the American Farm Bureau Federation applauds this Administration for its efforts to complete the National Conservation Program under the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act. RCA has provided useful information for conservation policy discussions.

Farm Bureau is concerned about the following items in the RCA program:

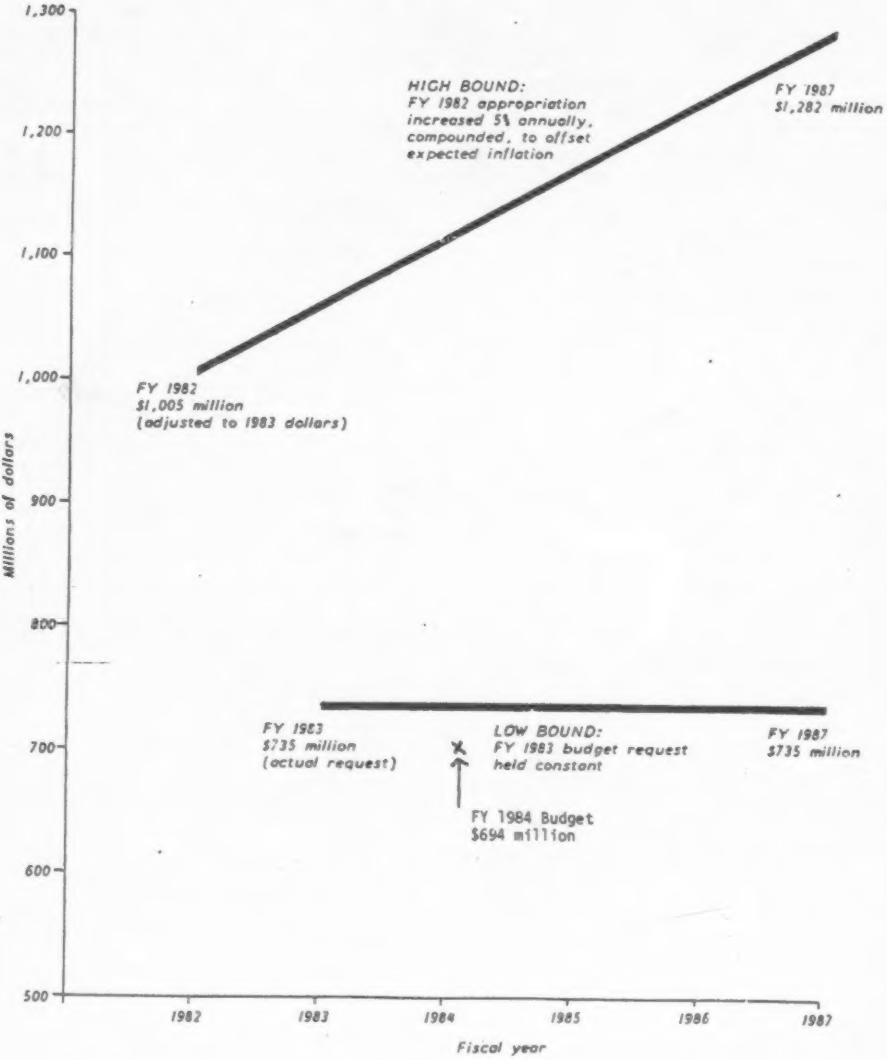
1. While we agree wholeheartedly that erosion control should be considered as the highest priority under RCA, we are concerned that the USDA budget proposals do

not reflect such a priority selection. Less than 5 percent of the total soil conservation budget is now being used to cost/share erosion control on cropland with an excessive erosion problem. When President Reagan transmitted his Statement of Policy last December, he stated "While about one-third of America's cropland is currently experiencing soil erosion from wind and water at rates which threaten the long-term productivity of the land, about 54 percent of all sheet and rill erosion and 89 percent of the excessive erosion of this type occurs on about 10 percent, or 41 million acres, of the Nation's cropland." Additionally, a study concluded approximately a year ago indicated that "82 percent of the severely eroding lands in the United States are presently receiving only 21 percent of the ACP cost-sharing money." The problem is not more federal money, but rather, a better allocation in use of present program funds.

2. Farm Bureau recognizes the importance of accurate data on the status of soil and water conservation; however, we do not think this data needs to be updated every five years. We urge that the five-year interval for appraisals required in Public Law 95-192 be lengthened to at least a 10-year interval.

3. The President further stated in his Statement of Policy that "I anticipate that my future budget proposals will fall within the bounds of the recommended program. Funding for conservation programs, however, will necessarily be considered in each year's economic and fiscal context." We are concerned that a statement made in December 1982 anticipating budget proposals would fall "within" the low and high range is followed so closely (in January 1983) by a fiscal year 1984 budget "below" the low bound. Included with this statement is a chart from the USDA fiscal year 1984 budget which shows the low and high bounds for funding through 1987 and also indicates that the fiscal year 1984 budget does fall significantly below the low bound.

Mr. Chairman, we thank you for holding this hearing and allowing Farm Bureau to express its views on the proposed program.



Projected range of funding for USDA soil and water conservation programs, 1982-87.